Great Traditions in Islamic Ethics

Edited By

Dr. S. M. R. Hejazi , H.I.M.

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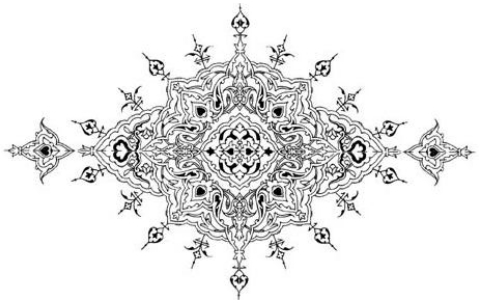
Islamic Ethics



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The Book: With its stimulating collection of traditions from the main figures of Islam, Great Traditions in Islamic Ethics takes the reader beyond the morality of Islam to the profound nature of Islamic Mystical inquiry. This excellent resource helps scholars, students and interests in Islamic Morality develop their knowledge and understanding needed to examine and scrutinize traditions in Islamic ethics. This book (hopefully the first volume of consecutive volumes) has an introduction and eight chapters. The first chapter contains selected verses from the Holy Quran which concern certain moral problems and ethical characteristics. The second chapter contains a collection of Prophetic traditions presenting moral behaviors and ethical guidelines. The next six chapters present selected sermons, sayings, wise maxims of the Imams, the successors of the Holy Prophet of Islam, concerning moral problems and ethical teachings.

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The Most Compassionate, The Most Merciful

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

General

Ethics "*ethikos*" as the study of value or quality, examines the analysis and employment of concepts such as right, wrong, good, evil, duties and responsibility. Ethics as a major branch of philosophy, is divided into three primary areas: meta-ethics, normative ethics and applied ethics.

Meta-ethics is the study of the concept of ethics and its subdivisions. Normative ethics is the attempt to arrive at general moral standards that tell us how to judge right from wrong, or good from bad, and how to live moral lives. This may involve articulating the character or good habits that we should attain, the duties that we should follow, or the consequences of our behavior on ourselves and others. Applied ethics or practical ethics is the study of the use of ethical values and moral conducts.

Ethics or moral science, as a division of scientific discipline, pursues its work in relation to many other disciplines and cannot be understood apart from them. In some cases ethics borrows concepts from other branches of science; in other instances it arrives at its own insights by translating for its use concepts and categories which have originated elsewhere; in still other situations it rejects the approaches of other disciplines. Ethics has the greatest and precise relation and inter action with the concepts and norms derived from religion and religious sciences. Theoretically and historically we may observe this inter-disciplinary correlation between ethics and religion. However, if we are to understand the form and character of a religious ethics, we must develop some examinations for the possible ways of understanding religion as well as

for the possible meaning of ethical discourse and behavior. Only thus can we adequately think about the relationship of ethics and religion.

Most religions have a moral component, and religious approaches to the problem of ethics historically dominated ethics over secular approaches. Hence, from the point of view of theistic religions, to the extent that ethics stems from revealed truth from divine sources, ethics is studied as a branch of theology.

In religious basis, ethics goes further than presenting opportunities for practical action; it proceeds to speak of, indeed to constitute, the guides, norms and obligations of which the challenge, and at times the cross, of human responsibility is constituted. With these norms come also lasting obligations which test our will, bind us to others, and challenge our fortitude and commitment. It is most essential then that here--perhaps beyond other areas--we understand the foundations on which moral obligations are based, the norms by which they are described, guided and integrated, and the combination of freedom and love which makes possible their fulfillment.

In the realm of religion and religious standards, ethics, however, is not merely an individual matter, as often has been presupposed in some schools of thought. It is of the greatest importance to social life and is greatly influenced in turn by the life of society.

In exploring the interrelation between ethics and religion, we may follow one of the two approaches. In one approach, the moralist explores the interrelationship between religion and ethics as a fact that ethical requirements are religious when they are held to be divinely commanded as sacred obligations. In another study, an ethic is religious when it is held to be by its devotees. Moral propositions are therefore, considered by religious thinkers to be intimately related to religious commitments.

Islam

Like other well-known religions, Islam as a theistic religion, has been profoundly developed its tied relation with the science of ethics and

moral standard. Hence, Ethics or moral teaching, as a systematic discipline, has a special place in the Islamic religion. Reflecting on the above mentioned approaches, Muslim moralists explore the interrelationship between religion and ethics as a fact that ethical requirements are religious when they are held to be divinely commanded as sacred obligations. In another approach, an ethic is religious or Islamic when it is held to be by its devotees. Moral propositions are therefore, considered by Muslim thinkers to be intimately related to Islamic commitments.

Islamic ethical reflection has long been carried out in relation to moral philosophy. The relationship between these two branches of inquiry has sometimes been very close and at other times been quite distant; sometimes friendly, at other times hostile. It is impossible to understand Islamic systematic ethics without some appreciation of philosophical ways of dealing with moral issues. In order to understand Islamic ethics as a field of discourse, it is important to have at least a broad view of ethical discourse as found in moral philosophy.

However, since morality and ethics, in their traditional use, construct a very significant aspect of Islam as a divine religion, Islamic traditions and texts play the main role in the foundation and formation of Islamic Ethics. Consequently, morality forms an essential part of the Islamic religion, which is basically presented in the Holy book of Islam, the Holy Quran, the word of God. The basis of Islamic morality thus rests firmly established on the word of God, requiring unwavering faith, not on the uncertain and shifting phase of human opinion. That Holy Book contained not only moral principles which are obligatory on all, but advocates also of great perfection which those who had the moral strength were encouraged to adopt as rules for the conduct of their lives. The perfect holiness of God Himself was held up as the model which they were to replicate and the superior ideal at which they were ever to seek.

Besides the Holy Quran, there is a variety of literature of Islamic ethics primarily aims to answer a broad range of moral questions and, hence, may be classified as a normative ethics. On the other hand, Islamic

philosophical works on ethics were written in a culture of whose literary and religious ideas were based in the Holy Quran. As such, there is a connection between the ethics of the Holy Quran and the ethics of the great Islamic philosophers. Therefore, Islamic ethics may be said to originate with the Holy Quran, its broad legal injunctions, wisdom narratives and prophetic teachings. Most subsequent Islamic ethical claims may be traced back to the texts, themes and teachings of the Holy Book and Prophetic teachings.

The Islamic literature shows a tendency to stay solely on the moral obligations and problems of life as appealing to man as an individual, leaving out of consideration the ceremonial and other laws which concern the Muslim nation. While no single text or tradition can hope to do everything required in Islamic ethical study, there is a need for a book and scholarly collection which surveys the field of Islamic ethics in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the wide variety of approaches found in both the historical and the contemporary materials. Rather than constructing its own internally systematic point of view, such a book should look for the patterns that have perpetually appeared in the analysis of these issues. It should introduce the reader to such patterns without being primarily concerned to argue that he should embrace a particular one of them.

Based on this assumption, a collection of sayings and teachings of the Islamic Saints, the holy Prophet and Imams, has been written and circulated as a practical guide, interpreting the Quranic literature as well as the prophetic traditions. This collection may involve articulating the character or good habits that we should attain, the duties that we should follow, or the consequences of our behavior on ourselves and others.

The relationship between Islamic faith and moral decision has been the subject of perpetual discussion and examination. When people of faith examine ethical issues they are ambitious to serious and prolonged reflection. Such reflection often finds its way into written form, where it stands for others to share, evaluate, and criticize. Many of the great theological works of Islamic history deserve study for both doctrinal and moral insights. Many available studies of Islamic ethics treat this material

in an historical manner, often by presenting selected portions by from great classic and traditional teachings.

In addition, the field of Islamic ethics as a contemporary discipline is comprised of a vast and varied literature in which ways of understanding the classics as well as different approaches to the present are set forth in many perspectives and many degrees of detail. A number of present texts add to the discussion by developing their own definitions of the proper relationship of faith to ethics.

This Book

This work has primarily endeavored to select and dispose certain segments of the Islamic tradition which is basically deals with ethical teachings and moral values. These great traditions, including some verses from the Holy Quran and teachings, sermons and sayings of the Prophet of Islam and Imams, present a collection of theoretical principles and practical guidelines that are recognized as ethical requirements and moral propositions in any systematic ethics and moral theology. This collection contains popular ethics in common form as the result of everyday life experience, without philosophical or systematic principles and ideals. However, this work, in an academic level, would help us to develop our understanding about the moral teachings and ethical values of Islam in both doctrinal and moral insights.

Introductory books in ethics are typically structured in one of two ways. Some are arranged topically, and focus on major themes and issues, such as cultural relativism, virtue, or duty. Although it is interesting to discuss morality from a topical standpoint, the downfall of this approach is that writers often sacrifice historical context and sometimes even present theories that no traditional philosopher actually ever proposed. Other ethics textbooks are structured historically, and present a continuous chronological sequence of theories, beginning in ancient and early time and ending in present times. Although this approach preserves historical context, many historically-oriented ethics books are tedious to read and give us too many picky facts about a philosopher's theory. The latter method has been followed in the present work.

There are many possible topics and figures that an ethics book might cover, and it's impossible for any single text to adequately touch upon everything of value. The issues and texts selected here are restricted to the most important ones in the field of ethical teachings and moral values. They are also the issues and traditions that Muslim as well as non-Muslim thinkers today commonly find interesting. Although the Muslim scholars of moral philosophy and theology today might have their own lists of favorite issues, hopefully the ones presented here would have a common appeal.

This book (hopefully the first volume of consecutive volumes) has an introduction and eight chapters. The first chapter contains selected verses from the Holy Quran which concern certain moral problems and ethical characteristics. The second chapter contains a collection of Prophetic traditions presenting moral behaviors and ethical guidelines. The next six chapters present selected sermons, sayings, wise maxims of the Imams, the successors of the Holy Prophet of Islam.

CHAPTER ONE

The Holy Quran

The Holy Quran

(610 CE – 632 CE)

Qur'an – literally means both recitation and reading – The Holy Book of Islam, revealed to the last Prophet, Muhammad (pbuh) through 23 years. Revelation of the Holy Quran was began in the year 610 CE and ended in the year 632 CE. The message was revealed in Arabic, the language of the people it was initially addressed to, even though the message was ultimately for the whole of humanity. The doctrine propounded by the Holy Qur'an is similar to and the continuation of the Scriptures of the earlier apostles. It lays down the same way of faith as was enjoined on Noah and Abraham. It confirms in the Arabic tongue what went before it, the Book of Moses and the Gospel of Jesus, in being a guide to mankind, admonishing the unjust and giving glad tidings to the righteous.

The Holy Quran is divided into chapters of unequal length, each of which is called a *sura,* a word that means literally "a fence, enclosure, or any part of a structure." The *Suras* are divided into short passages, each of which is called an *aya.* The Holy Qur'an consists of 114 chapters (*suras*) with a total of 6236 verses (*ayaat*). Each chapter, or *sura*, is generally known by a name derived from that chapter. The chapters are not arranged in chronological order (i.e. in the order in which Islamic scholars believe they were revealed) but in a different order, roughly descending by size. Its manner of presentation is simple and direct. It employs no artifice or conventional pose. Its appeal is to the intellect of man, his feelings and imagination. It draws lessons from the

daily experience of man's life, yet it speaks tersely and covers a multitude of subjects.

The Holy Qur'an is a book essentially religious, not philosophical, but it deals with all those problems which religion and philosophy have in common. Both have to say something about problems related to the significance of such expressions as God, the world, the individual soul, and the inter-relations of these moral and theological concepts; good and evil, right and wrong, free-will, and life after death. While dealing with these problems it also throws light on such conceptions as appearance and reality, existence and attributes, human origin and destiny, truth and error, space and time, permanence and change, eternity and immortality. The Holy Qur'an claims to give an exposition of universal truths with regard to these problems.

The Holy Qur'an not only prescribes beliefs and defines the metaphysical relation between man and his Creator but it also lays down rules of personal conduct and social behavior. Similarly, it also lays down the principles of moral and ethical values for the purpose of social and familial existence. The Book's main aim is to expound, clearly and adequately, the intellectual and moral foundations of the Islamic program for life. It seeks to consolidate these by appealing both the person's mind and to his/her heart.

In what follows, some selected verses are given of the Qur'anic teaching with regard to the moral-ethical problems mentioned above.

1. The Opening (Al-Fatiha)

1:5. Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek.

***

2. The Heifer (Al-Baqarah)

2:40 O Children of Israel! call to mind the (special) favor which I bestowed upon you, and fulfill your covenant with Me as I fulfill My Covenant with you, and fear none but Me.

2:47 Children of Israel! call to mind the (special) favor which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you to all other (for My Message).

2:83 And remember We took a covenant from the Children of Israel (to this effect): Worship none but Allah. treat with kindness your parents and kindred, and orphans and those in need; speak fair to the people; be steadfast in prayer; and practice regular charity. Then did ye turn back, except a few among you, and ye backslide (even now).

2:153. O ye who believe! seek help with patient perseverance and prayer; for Allah is with those who patiently persevere.

2:154. And say not of those who are slain in the way of Allah. "They are dead." Nay, they are living, though ye perceive (it) not.

2:155. Be sure we shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere,-

2:156. Who say, when afflicted with calamity: "To Allah We belong, and to Him is our return":-

2:157. They are those on whom (descend) blessings from their Lord, and Mercy, and they are the ones that receive guidance.

2:212 The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for Allah bestows His abundance without measure on whom He will.

2:177. It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness- to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and give Zakat (regular charity); to fulfill the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God fearing.

2:215 They ask thee what they should spend (In charity). Say: Whatever ye spend that is good, is for parents and kindred and orphans and those in want and for wayfarers. And whatever ye do that is good, -(Allah) knoweth it well.

2:218. Those who believed and those who suffered exile and fought (and strove and struggled) in the path of Allah,- they have the hope of the Mercy of Allah. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

2:219. They ask thee concerning wine and gambling. Say: "In them is great sin, and some profit, for men; but the sin is greater than the profit." They ask thee how much they are to spend; Say: "What is beyond your needs." Thus doth Allah make clear to you His Signs: In order that ye may consider-

2:220. (Their bearings) on this life and the Hereafter. They ask thee concerning orphans. Say: "The best thing to do is what is for their good; if ye mix their affairs with yours, they are your brethren; but Allah knows the man who means mischief from the man who means good. And if Allah had wished, He could have put you into difficulties: He is indeed Exalted in Power, Wise."

2:260. Behold! Abraham said: "My Lord! Show me how Thou givest life to the dead." He said: "Dost thou not then believe?" He said: "Yea! but to satisfy my own heart." He said: "Take four birds; tie them (cut them into pieces); then put a portion of them on every hill and call to them: They will come to thee (flying) with speed. Then know that Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise."

2:261. The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is that of a grain of corn: it groweth seven ears, and each ear Hath a hundred grains. Allah giveth manifold increase to whom He pleaseth: And Allah careth for all and He knoweth all things.

2:262. Those who spend their substance in the cause of Allah, and follow not up their gifts with reminders of their generosity or with injury,-for them their reward is with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

2:263. Kind words and the covering of faults are better than charity followed by injury. Allah is free of all wants, and He is Most-Forbearing.

2:264. O ye who believe! cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury,- like those who spend their wealth to be seen of men, but believe neither in Allah nor in the Last Day. They are in parable like a hard, barren rock, on which is a little soil: on it falls heavy rain, which leaves it (just) a bare stone. They will be able to do nothing with aught they have earned. And Allah guideth not those who reject faith.

2:265. And the likeness of those who spend their substance, seeking to please Allah and to strengthen their souls, is as a garden, high and fertile: heavy rain falls on it but makes it yield a

double increase of harvest, and if it receives not heavy rain, light moisture sufficeth it. Allah seeth well whatever ye do.

2:266. Does any of you wish that he should have a garden with date-palms and vines and streams flowing underneath, and all kinds of fruit, while he is stricken with old age, and his children are not strong (enough to look after themselves)- that it should be caught in a whirlwind, with fire therein, and be burnt up? Thus doth Allah make clear to you (His) Signs; that ye may consider.

2:267. O ye who believe! Give of the good things which ye have (honorably) earned, and of the fruits of the earth which We have produced for you, and do not even aim at getting anything which is bad, in order that out of it ye may give away something, when ye yourselves would not receive it except with closed eyes. And know that Allah is Free of all wants, and Worthy of all praise.

2:268. The Satan threatens you with poverty and bids you to conduct unseemly. Allah promiseth you His forgiveness and bounties. And Allah careth for all and He knoweth all things.

2:269. He granteth wisdom to whom He pleaseth; and he to whom wisdom is granted receiveth indeed a benefit overflowing; but none will grasp the Message but men of understanding.

2:270. And whatever ye spend in charity or whatever vow ye make, be sure Allah knows it all. But the wrong-doers have no helpers.

2:271. If ye disclose (acts of) charity, even so it is well, but if ye conceal them, and make them reach those (really) in need, that is best for you: It will remove from you some of your (stains of) evil. And Allah is well acquainted with what ye do.

2:272. It is not required of thee (O Messenger.), to set them on the right path, but Allah sets on the right path whom He pleaseth. Whatever of good ye give benefits your own souls, and ye shall only do so seeking the "Face" of Allah. Whatever good ye give, shall be rendered back to you, and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly.

2:273. (Charity is) for those in need, who, in Allah's cause are restricted (from travel), and cannot move about in the land, seeking (for trade or work): the ignorant man thinks, because of their modesty, that they are free from want. Thou shalt know them by their (unfailing) mark: They beg not importunately from all the sundry. And whatever of good ye give, be assured Allah knoweth it well.

2:274. Those who (in charity) spend of their goods by night and by day, in secret and in public, have their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

2:275. Those who devour usury will not stand except as stand one whom the Satan by his touch Hath driven to madness. That is because they say: "Trade is like usury," but Allah hath permitted trade and forbidden usury. Those who after receiving direction from their Lord, desist, shall be pardoned for the past; their case is for Allah (to judge); but those who repeat (the offense) are companions of the Fire: They will abide therein (for ever).

2:276. Allah will deprive usury of all blessing, but will give increase for deeds of charity: For He loveth not any ungrateful and wicked.

2:277. Those who believe, and do deeds of righteousness, and establish regular prayers and regular charity, will have their reward with their Lord: On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

2:278. O ye who believe! Fear Allah, and give up what remains of your demand for usury, if ye are indeed believers.

2:279. If ye do it not, take notice of war from Allah and His Messenger. But if ye repent, ye shall have your capital sums: Deal not unjustly, and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly.

2:280. If the debtor is in a difficulty, grant him time till it is easy for him to repay. But if ye remit it by way of charity, that is best for you if ye only knew.

2:281. And fear the Day when ye shall be brought back to Allah. Then shall every soul be paid what it earned, and none shall be dealt with unjustly.

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3. The Family of Imran (Al-Imran)

3:14 Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet: Women and sons; Heaped-up hoards of gold and silver; horses branded (for blood and excellence); and (wealth of) cattle and well-tilled land. Such are the possessions of this world's life; but in nearness to Allah is the best of the goals (To return to).

3:31 Say: "If ye do love Allah, Follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your sins: For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

3:92 By no means shall ye attain righteousness unless ye give (freely) of that which ye love; and whatever ye give, of a truth Allah knoweth it well.

3:103 And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah's favor on you; for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye became brethren; and ye were on the brink of the pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus doth Allah make His Signs clear to you: That ye may be guided.

3:135 And those who, having done something to be ashamed of, or wronged their own souls, earnestly bring Allah to mind, and ask for forgiveness for their sins,- and who can forgive sins except Allah.- and are never obstinate in persisting knowingly in (the wrong) they have done.

3:159 It is part of the Mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of

moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).

***

4. Women (An-Nisa)

4:17 Allah accept the repentance of those who do evil in ignorance and repent soon afterwards; to them will Allah turn in mercy: For Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.

4:18 Of no effect is the repentance of those who continue to do evil, until death faces one of them, and he says, "Now have I repented indeed;" nor of those who die rejecting Faith: for them have We prepared a punishment most grievous.

4:36 Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him; and do good- to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (ye meet), and what your right hands possess: For Allah loveth not the arrogant, the vainglorious.

4:58 Allah doth command you to render back your Trusts to those to whom they are due; And when ye judge between man and man, that ye judge with justice: Verily how excellent is the teaching which He giveth you! For Allah is He Who heareth and seeth all things.

4:77 Hast thou not turned Thy vision to those who were told to hold back their hands (from fight) but establish regular prayers and spend in regular charity? When (at length) the order for fighting was issued to them, behold! a section of them feared men as - or even more than - they should have feared Allah. They said: "Our Lord! Why hast Thou ordered us to fight? Wouldst Thou not Grant us respite to our (natural) term, near (enough)?" Say: "Short is the enjoyment of this world: the Hereafter is the best for those who do right: Never will ye be dealt with unjustly in the very least!

4:86 When a (courteous) greeting is offered you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or (at least) of equal courtesy. Allah takes careful account of all things.

4:94 O ye who believe! When ye go abroad in the cause of Allah, investigate carefully, and say not to any one who offers you a salutation: "Thou art none of a believer!" Coveting the perishable goods of this life: with Allah are profits and spoils abundant. Even thus were ye yourselves before, till Allah conferred on you His favors: Therefore carefully investigate. For Allah is well aware of all that ye do.

4:112 But if any one earns a fault or a sin and throws it on to one that is innocent, He carries (on himself) (Both) a falsehood and a flagrant sin.

4:135 O ye who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.

4:142 The Hypocrites - they think they are over-reaching Allah, but He will over- reach them: When they stand up to prayer, they stand without earnestness, to be seen of men, but little do they hold Allah in remembrance.

***

5. The Table Spread (Al-Maeda)

5:8 O ye who believe! stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.

5:12 Allah did aforetime take a covenant from the Children of Israel, and we appointed twelve captains among them. And Allah

said: "I am with you: if ye (but) establish regular prayers, practice regular charity, believe in my apostles, honor and assist them, and loan to Allah a beautiful loan, verily I will wipe out from you your evils, and admit you to gardens with rivers flowing beneath; but if any of you, after this, resisteth faith, he hath truly wandered from the path or rectitude."

5:91 Satan's plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, and from prayer: will ye not then abstain?

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6. The Cattle (Al-Anàam)

6:32 What is the life of this world but play and amusement? But best is the home in the hereafter, for those who are righteous. Will ye not then understand?

6:54 When those come to thee who believe in Our signs, Say: "Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule of) mercy: verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amend (his conduct), lo! He is Oft- forgiving, Most Merciful.

6:70 Leave alone those who take their religion to be mere play and amusement, and are deceived by the life of this world. But proclaim (to them) this (truth): that every soul delivers itself to ruin by its own acts: it will find for itself no protector or intercessor except Allah. if it offered every ransom, (or reparation), none will be accepted: such is (the end of) those who deliver themselves to ruin by their own acts: they will have for drink (only) boiling water, and for punishment, one most grievous: for they persisted in rejecting Allah.

6:151. Say: "Come, I will rehearse what Allah hath (really) prohibited you from": Join not anything with Him; be good to your parents; kill not your children on a plea of want;- We provide sustenance for you and for them;- come not nigh to indecent deed f9b s. Whether open or secret; take not life, which Allah hath made

sacred, except by way of justice and law: thus doth He command you, that ye may learn wisdom.

6:152. And come not nigh to the orphan's property, except to improve it, until he attain the age of full strength; give measure and weight with (full) justice;- no burden do We place on any soul, but that which it can bear;- whenever ye speak, speak justly, even if a near relative is concerned; and fulfill the Covenant of Allah. thus doth He command you, that ye may remember.

6:153. Verily, this is My Way, leading straight: follow it: follow not (other) paths: they will scatter you about from His Path: thus doth He command you, that ye may be righteous.

6:165 It is He Who hath made you (His) agents, inheritors of the earth: He hath raised you in ranks, some above others: that He may try you in the gifts He hath given you: for thy Lord is quick in punishment: yet He is indeed Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

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7. The Heights (Al-A`raaf)

7:33 Say: the things that my Lord hath indeed forbidden are: shameful deeds, whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or reason; assigning of partners to Allah, for which He hath given no authority; and saying things about Allah of which ye have no knowledge.

7:51 "Such as took their religion to be mere amusement and play, and were deceived by the life of the world." That day shall We forget them as they forgot the meeting of this day of theirs, and as they were wont to reject Our signs.

7:167. Behold! thy Lord did declare that He would send against them, to the Day of Judgment, those who would afflict them with grievous chastisement. Thy Lord is quick in retribution, but He is also Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

7:168. We broke them up into sections on this earth. There are among them some that are the righteous, and some that are the opposite. We have tried them with both prosperity and adversity: In order that they might turn (to Us).

7:169. After them succeeded an (evil) generation: They inherited the Book, but they chose (for themselves) the vanities of this world, saying (for excuse): "(Everything) will be forgiven us." (Even so), if similar vanities came their way, they would (again) seize them. Was not the covenant of the Book taken from them, that they would not ascribe to Allah anything but the truth? and they study what is in the Book. But best for the righteous is the Home in the Hereafter. Will ye not understand?

7:170. As to those who hold fast by the Book and establish regular prayer, - never shall We suffer the reward of the righteous to perish.

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9. Repentance (Al-Tauba)

9:69 As in the case of those before you: they were mightier than you in power, and more flourishing in wealth and children. They had their enjoyment of their portion: and ye have of yours, as did those before you; and ye indulge in idle talk as they did. They!- their work are fruitless in this world and in the Hereafter, and they will lose (all spiritual good).

9:71 The Believers, men and women, are protectors one of another: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practice regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is Exalted in power, Wise.

9:75. Amongst them are men who made a covenant with Allah, that if He bestowed on them of His bounty, they would give (largely) in charity, and be truly amongst those who are righteous.

9:76. But when He did bestow of His bounty, they became misers, and turned back (from their covenant), averse (from its fulfillment).

9:77. So He hath put as a consequence hypocrisy into their hearts, (to last) till the Day whereon they shall meet Him: because they broke their covenant with Allah, and because they lied (again and again).

9:78. Know they not that Allah doth know their secret (thoughts) and their secret counsels, and that Allah knoweth well all things unseen?

9:79. Those who slander such of the believers as give themselves freely to (deeds of) charity, as well as such as can find nothing to give except the fruits of their labor,- and throw ridicule on them,- Allah will throw back their ridicule on them: and they shall have a grievous chastisement.

9:112 Those that turn (to Allah. in repentance; that serve Him, and praise Him; that wander in devotion to the cause of Allah,: that bow down and prostrate themselves in prayer; that enjoin good and forbid evil; and observe the limit set by Allah.- (These do rejoice). So proclaim the glad tidings to the Believers.

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10. Jonah (Yünus)

10:7. Those who rest not their hope on their meeting with Us, but are pleased and satisfied with the life of the present, and those who heed not Our Signs,-

10:8. Their abode is the Fire, because of the (evil) they earned.

10:9. Those who believe, and work righteousness,- their Lord will guide them because of their faith: beneath them will flow rivers in Gardens of Bliss.

10:10. (This will be) their prayer therein: "Glory to Thee, O Allah!", and "Peace" will be their greeting therein and the end of their

prayer will be: "Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds!"

10:11. If Allah were to hasten for men the ill (they have earned) as they would fain hasten on the good,- then would their respite be settled at once. But We leave those who rest not their hope on their meeting with Us, in their trespasses, wandering in distraction blindly.

10:12. When trouble toucheth a man, He crieth unto Us (in all postures)- lying down on his side, or sitting, or standing. But when We have removed his affliction, he passeth on his way as if he had never cried to Us for the affliction that touched him! thus do the deeds of transgressors seem fair in their eyes!

10:21. When We make mankind taste of some mercy after adversity hath touched them, behold! they take to plotting against Our Signs! Say: "Swifter to plan is Allah!" Verily, Our messengers record all the plots that ye make!

10:22. He it is Who enableth you to traverse through land and sea; so that ye even board ships;- they sail with them with a favorable wind, and they rejoice thereat; then comes a stormy wind and the waves come to them from all sides, and they think they are being overwhelmed: they pray unto Allah, sincerely offering (their) duty unto Him saying, "If Thou dost deliver us from this, we shall truly show our gratitude!"

10:23. But when he delivereth them, behold! they transgress insolently through the earth in defiance of right! O mankind! your insolence is against your own souls,- an enjoyment of the life of the present: in the end, to Us is your return, and We shall show you the truth of all that ye did.

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11. Hüd

11:9. If We give man a taste of Mercy from Ourselves, and then withdraw it from him, behold! he is in despair and (falls into) ingratitude.

11:10. But if We give him a taste of (Our) favors after adversity hath touched him, he is sure to say, "All evil has departed from me:" Behold! he falls into exultation and pride.

11:11. Not so do those who show patience and constancy, and work righteousness; for them is forgiveness (of sins) and a great reward.

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13. The Thunder (Al-Ràd)

13:22 Those who patiently persevere, seeking the countenance of their Lord; Establish regular prayers; spend, out of (the gifts) We have bestowed for their sustenance, secretly and openly; and turn off Evil with good: for such there is the final attainment of the (eternal) home.

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16. The Bee (An-Nahl)

16:30 To the righteous (when) it is said, "What is it that your Lord has revealed?" they say, "All that is good." To those who do good, there is good in this world, and the Home of the Hereafter is even better and excellent indeed is the Home of the righteous.

16:90 Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition.

16:104. Those who believe not in the Signs of Allah,- Allah will not guide them, and theirs will be a grievous Chastisement.

16:105. It is those who believe not in the Signs of Allah, that forge falsehood: it is they who lie!

16:106. Anyone who, after accepting faith in Allah, utters Unbelief,- except under compulsion, his heart remaining firm in Faith - but such as open their breast to Unbelief, on them is Wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a dreadful Chastisement.

16:107. This because they love the life of this world better than the Hereafter: and Allah will not guide those who reject Faith.

16:108. Those are they whose hearts, ears, and eyes Allah has sealed up, and they take no heed.

16:109. Without doubt, in the Hereafter they will be the losers.

16:125 Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for thy Lord knoweth best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance.

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17. The Night Journey (Al-Isra)

17:17 How many generations have We destroyed after Noah? and enough is thy Lord to note and see the sins of His servants.

17:18 If any do wish for the transitory things (of this life), We readily grant them - such things as We will, to such person as We will: in the end have We provided Hell for them: they will burn therein, disgraced and rejected.

17:19 Those who do wish for the (things of) the Hereafter, and strive therefore with all due striving, and have Faith,- they are the ones whose striving is acceptable (to Allah).

17:20 Of the bounties of thy Lord We bestow freely on all- These as well as those: The bounties of thy Lord are not closed (to anyone).

17:21 See how We have bestowed more on some than on others; but verily the Hereafter is more in rank and gradation and more in excellence.

17:22 Take not with Allah another object of worship; or thou (O man!) wilt sit in disgrace and destitution.

17:23 Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor.

17:24 And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: "My Lord! bestow on them thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood."

17:25 Your Lord knoweth best what is in your hearts: If ye do deeds of righteousness, verily He is Most Forgiving to those who turn to Him again and again (in true penitence).

17:26 And render to the kindred their due rights, as (also) to those in want, and to the wayfarer: But squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift.

17:27 Verily spendthrifts are brothers of the Evil Ones; and the Evil One is to his Lord (himself) ungrateful.

17:28 And even if thou hast to turn away from them in pursuit of the Mercy from thy Lord which thou dost expect, yet speak to them a word of easy kindness.

17:29 Make not thy hand tied (like a niggard's) to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach, so that thou become blameworthy and destitute.

17:30 Verily thy Lord doth provide sustenance in abundance for whom He pleaseth, and He provideth in a just measure. For He doth know and regard all His servants.

17:31 Kill not your children for fear of want: We shall provide sustenance for them as well as for you. Verily the killing of them is a great sin.

17:32 Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evils).

17:33 Nor take life - which Allah has made sacred - except for just cause. And if anyone is slain wrongfully, we have given his heir authority (to demand qisas or to forgive): but let him not exceed bounds in the matter of taking life; for he is helped (by the Law).

17:34 Come not nigh to the orphan's property except to improve it, until he attains the age of full strength; and fulfil (every) engagement, for (every) engagement will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning).

17:35 Give full measure when ye measure, and weigh with a balance that is straight: that is the most fitting and the most advantageous in the final determination.

17:36 And pursue not that of which thou hast no knowledge; for every act of hearing, or of seeing or of (feeling in) the heart will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning).

17:37 Nor walk on the earth with insolence: for thou canst not rend the earth asunder, nor reach the mountains in height.

17:38 Of all such things the evil is hateful in the sight of thy Lord.

17:39 These are among the (precepts of) wisdom, which thy Lord has revealed to thee. Take not, with Allah, another object of worship, lest thou shouldst be thrown into Hell, blameworthy and rejected.

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18. The Cave (Al-Kahf)

18:28 And keep thy soul content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face; and let not thine eyes pass beyond them, seeking the pomp and glitter of this Life; no obey any whose heart We have permitted to neglect the remembrance of Us, one who follows his own desires, whose case has gone beyond all bounds.

18:46 Wealth and sons are allurements of the life of this world: But the things that endure, good deeds, are best in the sight of thy Lord, as rewards, and best as (the foundation for) hopes.

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22. The Pilgrimage (Al-Hajj)

22:11 There are among men some who serve Allah, as it were, on the verge: if good befalls them, they are, therewith, well content; but if a trial comes to them, they turn on their faces: they lose both this world and the Hereafter: that is loss for all to see!

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24. Light (An-Nür)

24:19 Those who love (to see) scandal published broadcast among the Believers, will have a grievous Penalty in this life and in the Hereafter: Allah knows, and ye know not.

24:21 O ye who believe! follow not Satan's footsteps: if any will follow the footsteps of Satan, he will (but) command what is shameful and wrong: and were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah on you, not one of you would ever have been pure: but Allah doth purify whom He pleases: and Allah is One Who hears and knows (all things).

24:23 Those who slander chaste women, indiscreet but believing, are cursed in this life and in the Hereafter: for them is a grievous Penalty.

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25. The Criterion (Al-Furqan)

25:63. And the servants of (Allah) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace!"

25:64. Those who spend the night in adoration of their Lord prostrate and standing.

25:65. Those who say, "Our Lord! Avert from us the Wrath of Hell, for its Wrath is indeed an affliction grievous.

25:66. "Evil indeed is it as an abode, and as a place to rest in".

25:67. Those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just (balance) between those (extremes).

25:68. Those who invoke not, with Allah, any other god, nor slay such life as Allah has made sacred except for just cause, nor commit fornication; - and any that does this (not only) meets punishment.

25:69. (But) the Chastisement on the Day of Judgment will be doubled to him, and he will dwell therein in ignominy,

25:70. Unless he repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, for Allah will change the evil of such persons into good, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful,

25:71. And whoever repents and does good has truly turned to Allah in repentance;

25:72. Those who witness no falsehood, and, if they pass by futility, they pass by it with honorable (avoidance);

25:73. Those who, when they are admonished with the Signs of their Lord, droop not down at them as if they were deaf or blind;

25:74. And those who pray, "Our Lord! Grant unto us wives and offspring who will be the comfort of our eyes, and give us (the grace) to lead the righteous."

25:75. Those are the ones who will be rewarded with the highest place in heaven, because of their patient constancy: therein shall they be met with salutations and peace,

25:76. Dwelling therein;- how beautiful an abode and place of rest!

25:77. Say (to the Rejecters): "My Lord would not concern Himself with you but for your call on Him: but ye have indeed rejected (Him), and soon will come the inevitable (punishment)!"

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28. Narration (Al-Qasas)

28:77 "But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget thy portion in this world: but do thou good, as Allah has been good to thee, and seek not (occasions for) mischief in the land: for Allah loves not those who do mischief."

28:79. So he went forth among his people in the (pride of his worldly) glitter. Said those whose aim is the life of this world: "Oh! that we had the like of what Qārün has got! for he is truly a lord of mighty good fortune!"

28:80. But those who had been granted (true) knowledge said: "Alas for you! The reward of Allah (in the Hereafter) is best for those who believe and work righteousness: but this none shall attain, save those who steadfastly persevere (in good)."

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29. The Spider (Al-Ankabüt)

29:45 Recite what is sent of the Book by inspiration to thee, and establish regular Prayer: for Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds; and remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt. And Allah knows the (deeds) that ye do.

29:64. What is the life of this world but amusement and play? But verily the Home in the Hereafter,- that is life indeed, if they but knew.

29:65. Now, if they embark on a boat, they call on Allah, making their devotion sincerely (and exclusively) to Him; but when He has

delivered them safely to (dry) land, behold, they give a share (of their worship to others)!

29:66. Disdaining ungratefully Our gifts, and giving themselves up to (worldly) enjoyment! But soon will they know.

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31. The Wise (Luqman)

31:12. We bestowed (in the past) Wisdom on Luqmɔn: "Show (thy) gratitude to Allah." Any who is (so) grateful does so to the profit of his own soul: but if any is ungrateful, verily Allah is free of all wants, Worthy of all praise.

31:13. Behold, Luqmɔn said to his son admonishing him: "O my son! join not in worship (others) with Allah: for false worship is indeed the highest wrong-doing."

31:14. And We have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning: (hear the command), "Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (thy final) Goal.

31:15. "But if they strive to make thee join in worship with Me things of which thou hast no knowledge, obey them not; yet bear them company in this life with justice (and consideration), and follow the way of those who turn to Me: in the end the return of you all is to Me, and I will tell you all that ye did."

31:16. "O my son!" (said Luqmɔn), "If there be (but) the weight of a mustard-seed and it were (hidden) in a rock, or (anywhere) in the heavens or on earth, Allah will bring it forth: for Allah is Subtle and Aware .

31:17. "O my son! establish regular prayer, enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong: and bear with patient constancy whatever betide thee; for this is firmness (of purpose) in (the conduct of) affairs.

31:18. "And swell not thy cheek (for pride) at men, nor walk in insolence through the earth; for Allah loveth not any arrogant boaster.

31:19. "And be moderate in thy pace, and lower thy voice; for the harshest of sounds without doubt is the braying of the ass."

31:33 O mankind! do your duty to your Lord, and fear (the coming of) a Day when no father can avail aught for his son, nor a son avail aught for his father. Verily, the promise of Allah is true: let not then this present life deceive you, nor let the chief Deceiver deceive you about Allah.

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33. The Confederates (Al-Ahzab)

33:33 And stay quietly in your houses, and make not a dazzling display, like that of the former Times of Ignorance; and establish regular Prayer, and give regular Charity; and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah only wishes to remove all abomination from you, ye members of the Family, and to make you pure and spotless.

33:35 For Muslim men and women,- for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in Charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise,- for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward.

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35. The Originator (Fatir)

35:18 Nor can a bearer of burdens bear another's burdens if one heavily laden should call another to (bear) his load. Not the least portion of it can be carried (by the other). Even though he be

nearly related. Thou canst but admonish such as fear their Lord unseen and establish regular Prayer. And whoever purifies himself does so for the benefit of his own soul; and the destination (of all) is to Allah.

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39. The Groups (Az-Zumar)

39:7. If ye reject (Allah), Truly Allah hath no need of you; but He liketh not ingratitude from His servants: if ye are grateful, He is pleased with you. No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another. In the end, to your Lord is your Return, when He will tell you the truth of all that ye did (in this life), for He knoweth well all that is in (men's) hearts.

39:8. When some trouble toucheth man, he crieth unto his Lord, turning to Him in repentance: but when He bestoweth a favor upon him as from Himself, (man) doth forget what he cried and prayed for before, and he doth set up rivals unto Allah, thus misleading others from Allah's Path. Say, "Enjoy thy disbelief for a little while: verily thou art (one) of the Companions of the Fire!"

39:9. Is one who worships devoutly during the hour of the night prostrating himself or standing (in adoration), who takes heed of the Hereafter, and who places his hope in the Mercy of his Lord - (like one who does not)? Say: "Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? It is those who are endued with understanding that receive admonition.

39:10. Say: "O ye My servants who believe! Fear your Lord, good is (the reward) for those who do good in this world. Spacious is Allah's earth! Those who patiently persevere will truly receive a reward without measure!"

39:11. Say: "Verily, I am commanded to serve Allah with sincere devotion;

39:12. "And I am commanded to be the first of those who submit to Allah in Islam."

39:13. Say: "I would, if I disobeyed my Lord, indeed have fear of the Chastisement of a Mighty Day."

39:14. Say: "It is Allah I serve, with my sincere (and exclusive) devotion:

39:15. "Serve ye what ye will besides Him." Say: "Truly, those in loss are those who lose their own souls and their people on the Day of Judgment: Ah! That is indeed the (real and) evident Loss!

39:16. They shall have Layers of Fire above them, and Layers (of Fire) below them: with this doth Allah warn off His servants: "O My Servants! then fear ye Me!"

39:17. Those who eschew Taghut,- and fall not into its worship,- and turn to Allah (in repentance),- for them is Good News: so announce the Good News to My Servants,-

39:18. Those who listen to the Word, and follow the best of in it: those are the ones who Allah has guided, and those are the ones endued with understanding.

39:19. Is, then, one against whom the decree of Punishment is justly due (equal to one who eschews Evil)? Wouldst thou, then, deliver one (who is) in the Fire?

20. But it is for those who fear their Lord, that lofty mansions, one above another, have been built: beneath them flow rivers: (such is) the Promise of Allah. never doth Allah fail in (His) promise.

39:21. Seest thou not that Allah sends down rain from the sky, and leads it through springs in the earth? Then He causes to grow, therewith, produce of various colors: then it withers; thou wilt see it grow yellow; then He makes it dry up and crumble away. Truly, in this, is a Message of remembrance to men of understanding.

39:22. Is one whose heart Allah has opened to Islam, so that he has received Light from Allah, (no better than one hard-hearted)? Woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of Allah! they are manifestly wandering (in error)!

39:23. Allah has revealed (from time to time) the most beautiful Message in the form of a Book, consistent with itself, (yet) repeating (its teaching in various aspects): the skins of those who fear their Lord tremble thereat; then their skins and their hearts do soften to the remembrance of Allah. Such is the guidance of Allah. He guides therewith whom He pleases, but such as Allah leaves to stray, can have none to guide.

39:24. Is, then, one who has to ward off the brunt of the Chastisement on the Day of Judgment (and receive it) on his face, (like one guarded there from)? It will be said to the wrong- doers: "Taste ye (the fruits of) what ye earned!"

39:25. Those before them (also) rejected (revelation), and so the Punishment came to them from directions they did not perceive.

39:26. So Allah gave them a taste of humiliation in the present life, but greater is the punishment of the Hereafter, if they only knew!

39:32. Who, then, doth more wrong than one who utters a lie concerning Allah, and rejects the Truth when it comes to him! Is there not in Hell an abode for the unbelievers?

39:33. And he who brings the Truth and he who confirms (and supports) it - such are the men who do right.

39:34. They shall have all that they wish for, with their Lord: such is the reward of those who do good.

39:35. So that Allah will remit from them (even) the worst in their deeds and give them their reward according to the best of what they have done.

39:36. Is not Allah enough for His Servant? But they try to frighten thee with other (gods) besides Him! for such as Allah leaves to stray, there can be no guide.

39:37. And such as Allah doth guide there can be none to lead astray. Is not Allah Exalted in Power, Lord of Retribution?

39:45 When Allah, the One and only, is mentioned, the hearts of those who believe not in the Hereafter are filled with disgust and horror; but when (gods) other than He are mentioned, behold, they are filled with joy!

39:49 Now, when trouble touches man, he cries to Us: But when We bestow a favor upon him as from Ourselves, he says, "This has been given to me because of a certain knowledge (I have)!" Nay, but this is but a trial, but most of them understand not!

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42. Consultation (Ash-Shüra)

42:20 To any that desires the tilth of the Hereafter, We give increase in his tilth, and to any that desires the tilth of this world, We grant somewhat thereof, but he has no share or lot in the Hereafter.

42:30. Whatever misfortune happens to you, is because of the things your hands have wrought, and for many (a sin) He grants forgiveness.

42:31. Nor can ye escape through the earth; nor have ye, besides Allah, any one to protect or to help.

42:32. And among His Signs are the ships, smooth-running through the ocean, (tall) as mountains.

42:33. If it be His Will, He can still the Wind: then would they become motionless on the back of the (ocean). Verily in this are Signs for everyone who patiently perseveres and is grateful.

42:34. Or He can cause them to perish because of the (evil) which (the men) have earned; but much doth He forgive.

42:35. But let those know, who dispute about Our Signs, that there is for them no way of escape.

42:36. Whatever ye are given (here) is (but) the enjoyment of this life: but that which is with Allah is better and more lasting: (it is) for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord:

42:37. Those who avoid the greater sins and indecencies, and, when they are angry even then forgive;

42:38. Those who respond to their Lord, and establish regular prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation; who spend out of what We bestow on them for Sustenance;

42:39. And those who, when an oppressive wrong is inflicted on them, (are not cowed but) help and defend themselves.

42:40. The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto (in degree): but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah: for (Allah) loveth not those who do wrong.

42:41. But indeed if any do help and defend himself after a wrong (done) to him, against such there is no cause of blame.

42:42. The blame is only against those who oppress men with wrong-doing and insolently transgress beyond bounds through the land, defying right and justice: for such there will be a chastisement grievous.

42:43. But indeed if any show patience and forgive, that would truly be an affair of great resolution.

42:44. For any whom Allah leaves astray, there is no protector thereafter. And thou wilt see the Wrong-doers, when in sight of the Chastisement, Say: "Is there any way (to effect) a return?"

42:45. And thou wilt see them brought forward to the (Penalty), abject in humbleness, (and) looking with a stealthy glance. And the Believers will say: "Those are indeed in loss, who lose themselves and their families on the Day of Judgment. Behold! Truly the Wrong-doers are in a lasting Chastisement!"

42:46. And no protectors have they to help them, other than Allah. And for any whom Allah leaves to stray, there is no way (to the Goal).

42:47. Respond ye to your Lord, before there come a Day which there will be no putting back, because of (the ordainment of) Allah! That Day there will be for you no place of refuge nor will there be for you any room for denial (of your sins)!

42:48. If then they run away, We have not sent thee as a guard over them. Thy duty is but to convey (the Message). And truly, when We give man a taste of a Mercy from Us, he doth exult thereat, but when some ill happens to him, on account of the deeds which his hands have sent forth, truly then is man ungrateful!

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43. Gold Adornments (Az-Zukhruf)

43:32 Is it they who would portion out the Mercy of thy Lord? It is We Who portion out between them their livelihood in the life of this world: and We raise some of them above others in ranks, so that some may command work from others. But the Mercy of thy Lord is better than the (wealth) which they amass.

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45. Bowing the Knee (Al-Jathiya)

45:35 "This, because ye used to take the Signs of Allah in jest, and the life of the world deceived you:" (From) that Day, therefore, they shall not be taken out thence, nor shall they be received into Grace.

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46. Winding Sand-tracts (Al-Ahqaf)

46:15 We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents: In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth. The carrying of the (child) to his weaning is (a period of) thirty months. At length, when he reaches the age of full strength and attains

forty years, he says, "O my Lord! Grant me that I may be grateful for Thy favor which Thou has bestowed upon me, and upon both my parents, and that I may work righteousness such as Thou mayest approve; and be gracious to me in my issue. Truly have I turned to Thee and truly do I bow (to Thee) in Islam."

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47. Muhammad

47:36 The life of this world is but play and amusement: and if ye believe and guard against Evil, He will grant you your recompense, and will not ask you (to give up) your possessions.

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49. The Inner Apartments (Al-Hujurat)

49:7 And know that among you is Allah's Messenger; were he, in many matters, to follow your (wishes), ye would certainly fall into misfortune. But Allah has endeared the Faith to you, and has made it beautiful in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you Unbelief, wickedness, and rebellion; such indeed are those who walk in righteousness.

49:10 The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allah, that ye may receive Mercy.

49:12 O ye who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: And spy not on each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, ye would abhor it...But fear Allah. For Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.

49:13 O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).

49:15 Only those are Believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their persons in the Cause of Allah: Such are the sincere ones.

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53. The Star (An-Najm)

53:29 Therefore shun those who turn away from Our Message and desire nothing but the life of this world.

53:32 Those who avoid great sins and shameful deeds, only (falling into) small faults,- verily thy Lord is ample in forgiveness. He knows you well when He brings you out of the earth, And when ye are hidden in your mothers' wombs. Therefore justify not yourselves: He knows best who it is that guards against evil.

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57. Iron (Al-Hadid)

57:16 Has not the Time arrived for the Believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the remembrance of Allah and of the Truth which has been revealed (to them), and that they should not become like those to whom was given Revelation aforetime, but long ages passed over them and their hearts grew hard? For many among them are rebellious transgressors.

57:20 Know ye (all), that the life of this world is but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying, (in rivalry) among yourselves, riches and children. Here is a similitude: How rain and the growth which it brings forth, delight (the hearts of) the tillers; soon it withers; thou wilt see it grow yellow; then it becomes dry and crumbles away. But in the Hereafter is a Penalty severe (for the devotees of wrong). And Forgiveness from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure (for the devotees of Allah.. And what is the life of this world, but goods and chattels of deception?

57:25 We sent aforetime our apostles with Clear Signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance (of Right and Wrong), that men may stand forth in justice; and We sent down Iron, in which is (material for) mighty war, as well as many benefits for

mankind, that Allah may test who it is that will help, Unseen, Him and His apostles: For Allah is Full of Strength, Exalted in Might (and able to enforce His Will).

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58. The Woman who Pleads (Al-Mujadala)

58:9 O ye who believe! When ye hold secret counsel, do it not for iniquity and hostility, and disobedience to the Prophet; but do it for righteousness and self- restraint; and fear Allah, to Whom ye shall be brought back.

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59. The Gathering (Al-Hashr)

59:9 But those who before them, had homes (in Medina) and had adopted the Faith,- show their affection to such as came to them for refuge, and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the (latter), but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot). And those saved from the covetousness of their own souls,- they are the ones that achieve prosperity.

59:10 And those who came after them say: "Our Lord! Forgive us, and our brethren who came before us into the Faith, and leave not, in our hearts, rancour (or sense of injury) against those who have believed. Our Lord! Thou art indeed Full of Kindness, Most Merciful."

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60. The Woman to be Examined (Al-Mumtahana)

60:1 O ye who believe! Take not my enemies and yours as friends (or protectors),- offering them (your) love, even though they have rejected the Truth that has come to you, and have (on the contrary) driven out the Prophet and yourselves (from your homes), (simply) because ye believe in Allah your Lord! If ye have come out to strive in My Way and to seek My Good Pleasure, (take them not as friends), holding secret converse of love (and friendship) with them: for I know full well all that ye conceal and all

that ye reveal. And any of you that does this has strayed from the Straight Path.

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64. Mutual Loss and Gain (At-Taghabun)

64:16 So fear Allah as much as ye can; listen and obey and spend in charity for the benefit of your own soul and those saved from the covetousness of their own souls,- they are the ones that achieve prosperity.

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76. Time, Man (Ad-Dahr, Al-Insan)

76:7. They (the Righteous) perform (their) vows, and they fear a Day whose evil flies far and wide.

76:8. And they feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive,-

76:9. (Saying),"We feed you for the sake of Allah alone: no reward do we desire from you, nor thanks.

76:10. "We only fear a Day of frowning and distress from the side of our Lord."

76:11. But Allah will deliver them from the evil of that Day, and will shed over them a brightness and (blissful) Joy.

76:12. And because they were patient and constant, He will reward them with a Garden and (garments of) silk.

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98. The Clear Evidence (Al-Baiyina)

98:5 And they have been commanded no more than this: To worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion, being true (in faith); to establish regular prayer; and to practice regular charity; and that is the Religion Right and Straight.

CHAPTER TWO

Prophet Muhammad

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

(570 CE – 632 CE)

Prophet Muhammad (s) was born in 570 CE in Makkah (Bakka, Baca, Mecca). His father, Abdullah, died several weeks before his birth in Yathrib (Madinah) where he went to visit his father's maternal relatives. His mother, Ameneh, died while on the return journey from Madinah at a place called ‘Abwa’ when he was six years old. He was raised by his paternal grandfather 'Abd al Muttalib (Shaybah) until the age of eight, and after his grandfather’s death by Abu Talib, his paternal uncle.

Under the guardianship of Abu Talib, Muhammad (s) began to earn a living as a businessman and a trader. When he was twenty-five, Khadijah, widowed and forty years old, proposed marriage to Muhammad and he accepted the proposal. Muhammad (s) was popularly known as ‘al-Ameen’ for his unimpeachable character by the Makkans and visitors alike. The title Al-Ameen means the Honest, the Reliable and the Trustworthy, and it signified the highest standard of moral and public life.

About the year 610 CE, when he was forty years old, during his one of many retreats to Cave Hira (Jabal al-Noor) for meditation during the month of Ramadan, the Archangel Jibril (Gabriel) came to visit him, and announced that God had chosen him as His messenger to all mankind. In this occasion, Muhammad (s) received the first revelation from God. This revelation, which is later on called the Holy Quran, was completed through 23 years.

By 622, life in the small Muslim community of Mecca was becoming not only difficult, but dangerous. Muhammad then emigrated to Medina, then known as Yathrib, where there were a number of Muslim converts. This Hijra or emigration marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar, which is why Muslim dates have the suffix AH (After Hijra). About the year 632 CE (10th of Hijra), Muhammad (s) departed from this world at the age of sixty-three.

The mission of Prophet Muhammad (s) was to restore the worship of the One True God, the creator and sustainer of the universe, as taught by Prophet Ibrahim and all Prophets of God, and to demonstrate and complete the laws of moral, ethical, legal, and social conduct and all other matters of significance for the humanity at large. This mission, the religious line of all Prophets of God, is called Islam, meaning submitting (oneself or one's person to Allah).

The Prophet as the founder of Islam and the messenger of God's revelation to mankind is the interpreter par excellence of the Book of God; and his Hadith and Sunnah, his sayings and actions, are after the Quran, the most important sources of the Islamic tradition.

In what follows, some selected traditions (Hadith) are given of the Prophetic teaching with regard to the area of moral conducts and ethical values.

Some Wise Sayings of Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

* To acquire knowledge is binding upon all Muslims, whether male or female.

* The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr.

* He who travels in the search of knowledge, to him God shows the way of Paradise.

* People from the time of Adam onwards are as equal as the teeth of a comb. Arabs are not superior to non Arabs, nor are Red skinned people better than Blacks. No superiority or virtue exists except in terms of Piety.

* Hail to those who are so concerned with improving their own faults, that they abstain from preoccupation with the flaws of other believers.

* He, who is a parasite to others, shall be condemned in the eyes of God, the Almighty.

* The Quest for knowledge I cherish, superior to God's worship.

* The most virtuous from among you are those privileged with scrupulous manners. Likewise, they associate with others; while they also get along with them.

* He who indulges in a task without proper knowledge will deteriorate rather than improve the case.

* He who betrays the vicious deed of another in public, it is as though he has initiated the evil act himself.

* Do not argue with your brother, nor depress him with sarcastic humor, and do not make a promise so as to fail in fulfilling your covenant.

* Whensoever you are presented with a gift, make efforts to return the deed; if it is beyond your ability express your gratitude in words.

* Do not set up to accomplish a virtuous deed pretentiously, However, do not abandon righteousness due to shyness.

* Whomsoever initiates a graceful tradition; shall be rewarded as long as that tradition is sustained.

* There is no good in extravagance, however, there can never be extravagance in good deeds.

* Opportunities slide away like clouds.

* Victory is gained by resolution and determination.

* During the days of your life, divine breezes will blow, so watch out for them.

* Establish contact with those who have severed relations with you, and be good to those who have treated you badly.

* He who covets another's property, his sorrow shall be prolonged.

* Whenever a wise and sincere man advises you, take heed and welcome it gladly.

* There are two characteristics which cannot be found together in a believer; Avarice and a Vicious temper.

* Blessed be those who spend their excess wealth and abstain from excessive talk.

* He who calls upon his fellow Believer without their being any need, is destined to be among God's visitors.

* Whomsoever satisfies the need of a fellow Believer God shall meet his many needs.

* The most vicious among all men is he who is respected out of fear.

* I restrain you from three traits of character: Envy, Avarice and Arrogance.

* The true Muslim is the one from whose hand and tongue other Muslims are safe.

* Excessive requests from people lead to humiliation.

* Beware of obstinacy; since it begins with foolishness and ends in regret.

* Whatever you hate for yourself hate for others, and whatever you like for yourself , like for your brother.

* Adopt a cordial attitude towards your relatives and neighbors and with whomever you keep company and associate.

* There is no worship like Meditation, and there is no support more sure.

* Beware of too much laughter, since it mortifies the heart.

* The love of the world, is the root of all evils.

* Appreciate five things before five others: Your Youth before your Old age, Your Health before your illness, Your Wealth before your Poverty, Your Spare Time before your hard work and Your Life before Death.

* It is better to associate with a good friend than to remain in solitude, while being alone is better than dealing with a vicious companion.

* Be neither a fault finder, an eulogist, a defamer nor a wrangler.

* Social gatherings should be marked by good faith, divulging the secret of a friend is breach of faith.

* I restrain you from abandoning your fellow Believers: Though in case you are obliged to do so, it should not last for more than three days.

* He who is in a position to administer punishment should all the more be encouraged to forgive.

* The best of men is he who refrains from that which does not concern him.

* The best attire of man is severity associated with faith.

* Take care not to abuse a Muslim, or accuse an honest man of lying.

* There is no quicker way to receive punishment than by committing an outrage.

* Paradise lies at the feet of thy mother.

* He who wishes to enter Paradise must please his father and mother.

* A man giving in alms one piece of silver in his lifetime is better for him than giving one hundred when about to die.

* To meet friends cheerfully and invite them to a feast are charitable acts.

* To extend consideration towards neighbors and send them presents are charitable acts.

* Keep yourselves far from envy, because it eats up and takes away good actions, like the fire that eats up and burns wood.

* Whoever suppresses his anger, when he has in his power to show it, God will give him a great reward.

* He is not strong and powerful, who throws people down, but he is strong who withholds himself from anger.

* Deal gently with a people, and be not harsh; cheer them and condemn not.

* Much silence and a good disposition; there are no two works better than these.

* The best of friends is he who is best in behavior and character.

* One who does not practice modesty and does not refrain from shameless deeds is not a Muslim.

* No one who keeps his mind focused entirely upon himself, can grow large, strong and beautiful in character.

* Whoever loves to meet God, God loves to meet him.

* The five stated prayers erase the sins which have been committed during the intervals between them if they have not been mortal sins.

* God is not merciful to him who is not so to humankind. He who is not kind to God's creation and to his own children, God will not be kind to him.

* Whosoever visits a sick person, an angel calls from Heaven: "Be happy in the world and happy be your walking; and take your habitation in Paradise."

* Wealth properly employed is a blessing; and a man may lawfully endeavor to increase it by honest means.

* Acquire knowledge, because he who acquires it, in the way of the Lord, performs an act of piety; who speaks of it praises the Lord; who seeks it, adores God, who dispenses instruction in it, bestows alms; and who imparts it to its fitting objects, performs an act of devotion to God. Knowledge enables its possessor to distinguish what is forbidden from what is not; lights the way to Heaven; it is our friend in the desert, our companion in solitude, our companion, when bereft of friends; it guides us to happiness; it sustains us in misery; it is our ornament in the company of friends; it serves as an armor against our enemies. With knowledge the creatures of Allah rises to the heights of goodness and to noble position, associates with the sovereigns in this world and attains the perfection of happiness in the next.

* Meditation in God is my Capital. Reason and sound Logic is the rest of my Religion. Love is the Foundation of my existence. Enthusiasm is the Vehicle of my life. Contemplation of God is my companion. Faith is the source of my Power. Sorrow is my friend. Knowledge is my weapon. Patience is my Garb and Virtue. Submission to the Divine Will, is my Pride. Truth is my Salvation. Worship is my habit. And in Prayer lies the coolness of my Eye and the Peace of Mind.

* Acquire knowledge, it enables its professor to distinguish right from wrong; it lights the way to heaven. It is our friend in the desert, our company in solitude and companion when friendless. It guides us to happiness, it sustains us in misery, it is an ornament amongst friends and an armor against enemies.

* A Muslim who plants a tree or sows a field, from which man, birds and animals can eat, is committing an act of charity.

* There is a polish for everything that takes away rust; and the polish for the heart is the remembrance of Allah.

* What actions are most excellent? To gladden the heart of human beings, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted, to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful, and to remove the sufferings of the injured.

* The most excellent Jihad is that for the conquest of self.

* If you put your whole trust in Allah, as you ought, He most certainly will satisfy your needs, as He satisfies those of the birds. They come out hungry in the morning, but return full to their nests.

* When Allah created his creatures He wrote above His throne: 'Verily, my Compassion overcomes my wrath.

* Allah will not give mercy to anyone, except those who give mercy to other creatures.

* Say what is true, although it may be bitter and displeasing to people.

* Kindness is a mark of faith, and whoever is not kind has no faith.

* When you see a person who has been given more than you in money and beauty, look to those, who have been given less.

* If you do not feel ashamed of anything, then you can do whatever you like.

* O Lord, grant me your love, grant me that I love those who love you; grant me, that I might do the deeds that win your love. Make your love dearer to me than the love of myself, my family and wealth.

* It is better to sit alone than in company with the bad; and it is better still to sit with the good than alone. It is better to speak to a seeker of knowledge than to remain silent; but silence is better than idle words.

* Verily, a man teaching his child manners is better than giving one bushel of grain in alms.

* Whoever is kind, Allah will be kind to him; therefore be kind to man on the earth. He Who is in heaven will show mercy on you.

* It is difficult for a man laden with riches to climb the steep path, that leads to bliss.

* Who are the learned? Those who practice what they know.

* Allah has revealed to me, that you must be humble. No one should boast over one another, and no one should oppress another.

* Who is the most favored of Allah? He, from whom the greatest good comes to His creatures.

* A true one is thankful to Allah in prosperity, and resigned to His will in adversity.

* One who meets with others and shares their burdens is better than one who lives a life of seclusion and contemplation.

* Serve Allah, as you would if you could see Him; although you cannot see Him, He can see you.

* Allah does not look at your appearance or your possessions; but He looks at your heart and your deeds.

* The best richness is the richness of the soul.

* Keep yourselves far from envy; because it eats up and takes away good actions, like a fire eats up and burns wood.

* Much silence and a good disposition, there are no two things better than these.

* Verily, Allah is mild and is fond of mildness, and He gives to the mild what He does not give to the harsh.

* Whoever loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him.

* When two persons are together, two of them must no whisper to each other, without letting the third hear; because it would hurt him.

* Verily, it is one of the respects to Allah to honor an old man.

* All Muslims are like a foundation, each strengthening the other; in such a way they do support each other.

* Strive always to excel in virtue and truth.

* You will not enter paradise until you have faith; and you will not complete your faith till you love one another.

* He, who wishes to enter paradise at the best gate, must please his father and mother.

* The best of alms is that, which the right hand gives and the left hand knows not of.

* The perfect Muslim is not a perfect Muslim, who eats till he is full and leaves his neighbors hungry.

* He is not of us who is not affectionate to the little ones, and does not respect the old; and he is not of us, who does not order which is lawful, and prohibits that which is unlawful.

* No man is a true believer unless he desires for his brother that, what he desires for himself.

* To strive for the cause of Allah from daybreak to noon and sunset is better than the goods and enjoyment of the whole worldly life.

* Be not like the hypocrite who, when he talks, tells lies; when he gives a promise, he breaks it; and when he is trusted, he proves dishonest.

* The proof of a Muslim's sincerity is, that he pays no heed to that, which is not his business.

* Do you know what is better than charity and fasting and prayer? It is keeping peace and good relations between people, as quarrels and bad feelings destroy mankind.

* Conduct yourself in this world, as if you are here to stay forever; prepare for eternity as if you have to die tomorrow.

* The worldly comforts are not for me. I am like a traveller, who takes a rest under a tree in the shade and then goes on his way.

* Fear Allah wherever you are and follow up a bad deed with a good one as it will wipe it out and behave well towards people.

* Beware of the invocation of the oppressed as there is no barrier between it and Allah.

* Beware of oppression, for it will turn into darkness on the Day of Resurrection. And beware of miserliness for it ruined those who preceded you as it led them to bloodshed as well as be cautious in treating lawfully the forbidden acts.

* To talk about Allah's blessing is an expression of gratitude, and not doing so is an act of disbelief. The one who is not thankful for the few blessings will not be thankful for the many. And the one who is not thankful to the people will not be thankful to Allah. Unity is a blessing and division is a punishment.

* A hypocrite has three distinguishing signs, when he talks he lies, when he promises he breaks it and when he is entrusted with something, he betrays such trust.

* Avoid the seven great destructive sins. These are to join partners in worship with Allah, to practice sorcery, to kill without justification a living being whose life has been declared sacred by Allah, to practice usury, to misappropriate the property of an orphan, to flee from the battlefield at the time of fighting and to slander chaste and innocent believing women.

* Wish for others what you wish for yourself.

* Allah Most High loves a servant of His who is lenient when he sells, lenient when he buys, lenient when he pays his debt and lenient when he demands the payment of a debt due to him.

* When a person dies, all his deeds cease except for these three: Perpetual charity, a beneficial knowledge, and a child who invokes Allah for him.

* When any of you sees someone who is superior to him in riches and beauty, then he should look at another one who is inferior to him.

* The people most prone to trials with afflictions are the prophets and then the most pious and then the next in piety and so on. A man is tried according to the strength of his belief. If his belief is firm, his trial will be harder, and if his belief is weak, he is tried accordingly. A servant of Allah will go on being tried with afflictions until he walks on earth free of sins.

* Utter good words, spread the greeting of peace, be kind to your blood relations and pray at night while others sleep then enter Paradise in peace.

* Take advantage of five things before five others happen. These are your life before your death, your health before your illness, your leisure before pre-occupation, your youth before your old age, and your wealth before your poverty.

* The best Muslim among the believers is the one who does not harm the Muslims with either his tongue or his hand. The one with best belief among the believers is the one who has the best characters. The Muhajir (emigrant) is the one who abandons all that Allah has forbidden. And the best jihad (struggle for the sake of Allah) is to struggle against oneself for the sake of gaining the pleasure of Allah, to whom belongs might and majesty.

* The biggest of the major sins are: to join others in worship with Allah, to kill someone (unlawfully), to be undutiful to one's parents, and to bear false witness.

* Allah! I seek refuge with You from helplessness, laziness, cowardice, miserliness, and feeble old age. I seek refuge with You from the torture of the grave. I seek refuge with You from the

punishment of the Fire (of Hell) and I seek refuge with You from the trial of life and death.

* Allah! Forgive my sins, my ignorance and my exceeding the boundaries or righteousness, and forgive those of my sins which You know better than I, O Allah! Forgive those of my sins of the past and those which I have committed thereafter, the ones I committed openly and those I committed secretly; You are the One who makes the things go before, and You are the One Who delays them, and You are the Omnipotent.

* Allah! Set right for me my religion which is the safeguard of my affairs, set right for me my life in this world where I earn my livelihood, set right for me my life in the Hereafter where I have to return ultimately, make life for me a source of abundance for every virtue and make my death a source of comfort against all evils.

* Allah Most High has chosen this religion and the only things fitting for your religion are generosity and a good character. If such is true, then try to adorn your religion with these two.

* Allah Most High will ask each guardian about his charge. Did he guard or waste this trust? A man will even be asked about his family.

* Allah Most High has no better reward than Paradise for believing servants of His who is patient and resigned when He takes away his most beloved in this world.

* Allah loves that one should be kind and lenient in all matters.

* Allah had forbidden you to be undutiful to your mothers, to bury your female infants alive, parsimony and usurpation of the property of others. And he disapproved for you three things: vain talk and gossip, excessive questioning and wasting wealth.

* Allah Most High has forbidden the Fire (of Hell) on those who testify that there is no God but Allah, seeking thereby only Allah's pleasure.

* On the Day of Resurrection, Allah Most High says: "Where are those who love each other for the sake of My Majesty, today I shall provide them with My shade which is the day when there is no shade but Mine.

* Allah forgives my followers whatever (evil deeds) they may whisper to themselves as long as they do not act upon it or speak of it. Allah forgives my followers whatever their souls suggest to them as long as they do not act upon it or speak of it.

* Allah gives respite to an oppressor, but when He takes him to task, he never lets him escape.

* The practice of religion is easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will be overpowered by it. Therefore, be moderate, try to be near perfection but within your capacity and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded. And seek Allah's help by worshipping in the mornings, afternoons and during the last hour of the nights.

* A man may be denied sustenance because of a sin he had committed. Only supplication can ward off predestination, and only righteousness prolongs a life span.

* For every prophet there was one (special) invocation by which he appealed to Allah while he was among his followers, and that invocation was granted. As for me, I have kept my invocation until the Day of Resurrection to intercede with it on behalf of my followers.

* The best word is the "Book of Allah" and the best guidance is the "Guidance of Muhammad", may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him. And the worst things are heresies (those new elements introduced into the religion) and whatever you have been promised will surely come to pass, and you cannot frustrate it.

* One of the greatest sins that a man may commit is cursing his parent. The people asked: O Allah's Messenger, how may a man curse his parents? The Prophet replied: the man abuses the father

of another man and the latter answers by abusing the father and the mother of the former.

* The one who occupies the worst place before Allah on the Day of Resurrection, is the one whom people avoid for fear of his indecent language.

* Truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to Paradise. A man keeps on telling the truth `till, in the sight of Allah, he is named truthful. Lying leads to depravity and depravity leads to the Fire (of Hell), and man keeps on telling lies `till, in the sight of Allah, he is named a liar.

* Lying in my name is unlike lying in the name of any other. So whoever purposely lies in my name, let him occupy his place in the Fire (of Hell).

* One of the sayings that the people retained from the early prophets: "If you have no feeling of shame then do as you wish."

* To Allah belongs that which He takes, and to Him belongs that which He bestows, and everything has its term fixed by Him.

* Look at those who are inferior to you and do not look at those who are superior to you, for this will keep you from scorning what Allah has bestowed upon you.

* Help your brother whether he is an oppressor or an oppressed. It was said: how am I to help him if he is the oppressor? The Prophet replied, you stop him and prevent him from oppressing others. That is how you help him.

* Would you not like me to talk to you about what helps you enter Paradise? Striking with the sword, honoring one's guest, observing the times of prayers, ablution done thoroughly on a cold night, and giving food out of the love for Him (Allah).

* Shall I not inform you of the biggest of the major sins? To join others in worship with Allah, to be undutiful to one's parents, and to bear false witness.

* Any Muslim who gives another a garment to wear with which to cover his nakedness, Allah Most High will cover him with the green (clothes) of Paradise. Any Muslim who feeds a hungry Muslim, Allah will feed him on the Day of Resurrection from the fruits of Paradise. And any Muslim who gives a thirsty Muslim a drink, Allah Most High will give him to drink on the Day of Resurrection from the pure wine sealed with musk.

* Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the worst falsehood. Do not spy on others, do not look at others faults, do not hanker after a thing which others have. Do not envy one another, do not entertain ill-will towards one another, and do not stop talking to one another. And O Allah's servants! Be like brethren to each other.

* Modesty results in good alone.

* Avoid sitting in the public roads. They said: "but we have no alternative, these are the places where we get together and discuss matters." The Prophet said: "If you refuse but to sit, then pay the road its due." What is the right of the road, they asked? "Lowering your gaze, refraining from harming others, returning the greetings of others, enjoining virtuous deeds, and forbidding what is evil.

* Actions are but by intention, and every man shall have but that which he intended. Thus, he whose migration was for Allah and His Messenger, his migration was for Allah and His Messenger. And he whose migration was to achieve some worldly benefit or to take some woman in marriage, his migration was for that for which he had migrated.

* Righteousness is good morality, and wrongdoing is that which wavers your soul and which you hate people finding out about.

* Smiling to your Muslim brother is counted for you as a charity. Enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong is counted for you as a charity. Pointing out the way to a lost man is counted for you as a charity, and removing a stone, thorns, and bones from the road is counted for you as a charity.

* You see the believers in their mercy, affection and kindness towards one another, resembling one body, so that whenever a part of this body is in pain, the rest of the body shares the sleeplessness and the fever with it.

* Get to know Allah in prosperity and He will know you in adversity. Know that what passed you by was not going to befall you and what has befallen you was not going to pass you by. And know that victory comes with patience, relief with affliction, and with hardship.

* Whoever possesses the following three qualities tastes the sweetness of faith. These are to love Allah and His Messenger above all else, to love a person and to love him purely for Allah's sake and to hate reverting to disbelief as he hates to be thrown into the Fire of Hell.

* There are rights of a Muslim on his Muslim brother. These are, when you meet him greet him, when he invites you accept his invitation, when he solicits your advice, advice him, when he sneezes and praises Allah say to him "May Allah have mercy on you". When he gets sick visit him, and when he dies follow his funeral procession.

* That which is lawful is evident and that which is unlawful is evident and between the two of them is doubtful matters unknown to many people. So whoever avoids doubtful matters save his religion and his honor. And whoever indulges in these doubtful matters falls into that which is unlawful, like a shepherd who grazes his animals around a sanctuary, and at any moment he is liable to graze therein. Truly, every king has a sanctuary, and Allah's sanctuary on the earth is His prohibition. Truly, there is a piece of flesh in the body, that if it is sound, the whole body is sound but if is it diseased the whole body is diseased, and that is the heart.

* Do good deeds which are within your capacity, for Allah Most High does not get tired of giving rewards but surely, you will.

* Two traits are never found together in a believer, miserliness and bad character.

* The best amongst you are those who have the best character.

* The best things that a man leaves behind after his death are a virtuous child who invokes Allah for him, a perpetual charity, the reward of which reaches him, and a beneficial knowledge which remains useful after him.

* The best charity is the one given from a surplus of wealth. And start by giving to your dependants.

* Set aside that which leaves you in doubt for that which does not. For truth is reassuring and falsehood is disturbing.

* The supplication of a Muslim for his brother in his absence is granted. There is a certain angel who remains present with him, such that whenever he supplicates for something good for his brother, the attendant angel says "Amen" and the same for you.

* Religion is very easy, and whoever burdens himself in the practices of religion will be overcome by it.

* He savors the taste of faith, he who is satisfied to have Allah as God, Islam as religion, and Muhammad as a Messenger of Allah.

* The Most Beneficent sends His mercy on the merciful. The Most High and Exalted said, have mercy on those who are on earth, and the One in heaven will have mercy on you.

* Abusing a Muslim is evil, and fighting him is disbelief.

* Allah will shelter seven under His shade on the Day when there will be no shade but His. A just ruler (imam), a youth who has been brought up in worship of Allah. A man whose heart is attached to the mosque from the time he leaves it until he returns to it. Two persons who love each other, come together and part only for Allah's sake. A person whose eyes are flooded with tears when in solitude, he remembers Allah. A man who refuses the approaches of a beautiful woman of noble birth saying, I fear Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and a man who gives charity so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand has given.

* The Most superior appeal for Allah's forgiveness is for you to say, O Allah, you are my Lord, and there is no God but You. You created me and I am Your servant and I am faithful to my covenant and my promise to you to the best of my ability. I seek refuge with You from all the evil I have committed. I acknowledge before You all the blessings You have bestowed on me, and I acknowledge before you all my sins. So I entreat You to forgive me, for none has the power to forgive sins except You alone.

* The one who looks after a widow or a poor person is like a Mujahid (warrior) in the cause of Allah, or like him who performs prayers all the night and fast all the day.

* Doing good deeds protects one from calamities, charity given secretly extinguishes the wrath of the Lord, keeping good relations with one's relative increases one's life span. Every good deed is a form of charity. Those who do right in this world are those who do right in the Hereafter; whereas those who do wrong in this world are those who do wrong in the Hereafter, and the first to enter Paradise are those who do right.

* Verily, composure and resignation are essential at the first stroke of calamity.

* Well done to the one who is humble without lack of respect, who depreciates himself without being submissive, who spends from the money he gathers lawfully, who associates with the religiously learned and the wise and is merciful to the meek and the humble. Well done to the one who humbles himself, earns his living legally, is good in his hidden thoughts, honorable in public, and does not harm others. Well done to the one who practices what he learned, who spends the surplus of his wealth, and keeps to himself what is unnecessary to say.

* Purity is half of faith. "Praise be to Allah" fills the scale, "Glory be to Allah and praise be to Allah" fills the space between heaven and earth. Prayer is light, charity is a proof, patience is illumination, and the Qur'an is an argument in or against your favor. Everyone starts his day and is a vendor of his soul, either freeing it or bringing about its ruin.

* Oppression will be darkness on the Day of Resurrection.

* How wonderful is the believer's case, for there is good for him in everything, and this is exclusive only for believers. If something good happens to him, he is thankful and that is good for him, and if an adversity comes his way, he is patient, and that too is good for him."

* I am surprised at the believer, as whatever Allah Most High decrees for him, turns out to be good for him.

* Be truthful, for truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to Paradise. And a man keeps on telling the truth and striving for it until, in the sight Allah, he is named truthful. So beware of lying, for lying leads to depravity, and depravity leads to the Fire. On the other hand, another man keeps on telling lies and striving for it until, in the sight of Allah, he is named a liar.

* Backbiting is to tell things about your Muslim brother which he hates to be told. A man asked, what if my brother has such defects? The Prophet answered, "if your brother has such defects, you backbited him, if not, you slandered him."

* Allah Most High said, My mercy has preceded My anger.

* Say, O Allah! Creator of heavens and the earth, knower of both the hidden and the seen, the Lord and sovereign of everything, I bear witness that there is no god but You, I seek refuge with You from the evil of my self, and the evil and trap of Satan. Say it in the morning and in the evening and when you retire to bed.

* Say, O Allah! I have wronged myself very much, and none can forgive sins but You. Then bestow Your forgiveness upon me, and have mercy on me, indeed You are the Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.

* It is a grievous treachery on your part to carry a conversation with your brother in Islam in which you tell him lies and he believes you.

* Every good deed is a charity. The one who points out the way to do a good deed is rewarded the same as the one who does it, and Allah likes coming to the aid of the distressed.

* Eat, drink put on clothes, and give charity without squandering or conceit.

* There are two expressions which are easy for the tongue, heavy in the balance and dear to the Beneficent---Glory be to Allah and gratitude be to Him, glory be to Allah, the most exalted.

* All of you are guardians and responsible for your own charges. The ruler is a guardian and he is responsible for his subjects. A man is a guardian of his family and is responsible for his charges. A woman is a guardian in her husband's house and is responsible for her charges. A servant is a guardian of the property of his master and is responsible for his charges and a son is a guardian of the property of his father and is responsible for his charges. For all of you are guardians, and all of you are responsible for your charges.

* The Major sins are, to join others in worship with Allah, to be undutiful to one's parents, to kill someone, to take a false oath. Would you like me to tell you what is the biggest of the major sins? Yes, O Allah's Messenger, they replied. He said, to make a false statement.

* On going to bed at night, he would place his hand under his cheek and then say, with Your Name, O Allah, I live, and with Your Name I die. When he awoke, he would say, All praises belong to Allah Who has brought us back to life after He had caused us to die and Unto Him is the Resurrection.

* It is better for the one of you take a rope, go to the mountain, bring back a load of wood and sell it, and thereby Allah will save his face, rather than to ask people for handouts whether they give him or not.

* Allah damned the one who practices usury and the one who pays him as well as its two witnesses and the one who writes it down. They are equally guilty of committing that sin.

* None of you have true faith until he wishes for his Muslim brother what he wishes for himself.

* It is not lawful for a man to desert his Muslim brother for more than three days, so that when they meet, each turns his face away from the other. But the better of the two is the one who greets his brother first.

* The one who is not thankful to people is not thankful to Allah.

* A believer is not stung twice from the same hole (i.e. he is not deceived twice).

* Allah condemns the one who gives and accepts a bribe or who acts as a go-between in the realization of such.

* Allah has cursed those women who imitate or assume the manners of men, and those men who imitate women.

* A Muslim has six obligations within reason towards his Muslim brother. These are to greet him when he meets one, or to accept his invitation and to respond to him such supplication as "may Allah have mercy on you" when he sneezes. Furthermore, he has to visit his fellow Muslim brother when he gets sick, follow his funeral procession when he dies and should wish for him what he wishes for himself.

* Had a believer known what is the full extent of Allah's punishment, none would hope to gain His Paradise. And had a disbeliever known what is the full extent of Allah's mercy, none would despair of entering His Paradise.

* If the son of Adam had two valleys full of Gold, he would wish for a third, for nothing can fill the belly of the son of Adam except dust when he dies. And Allah forgives the one who repents to Him.

* The one who gets his fill of food while his neighbor is hungry by his side is not considered as a believer.

* Nothing weighs more in the balance of accounts on the Day of Resurrection than having a good character.

* Being rich does not mean having a great amount of property, but rather that of having self-contentment.

* A strong man is not the one who uses his strength to overcome others, but rather the one who controls himself while in the feat of anger.

* He who commits suicide by throttling himself shall keep on throttling himself in the Fire forever, and the one who commits suicide by stabbing himself shall keep on stabbing himself in the fire.

* No one has ever eaten a better food than that which he has obtained by working with his own hands. The Prophet of Allah, David, used to eat from what he earns through his own labor.

* Whatever a man spends on his house, family, children and servants, is considered in his account as a charity.

* For any fatigue, illness, fear, grief, hurt or distress which befalls a Muslim, even the pricking of a thorn, Allah expiates some of his sins.

* What do I care about this world, for I am in this world like a rider who sat for a while under the shade of a tree, then got up and left behind.

* If a ruler who has the authority to rule Muslim subjects dies while he is deceiving them, Allah will forbid Paradise for him.

* Whenever a Muslim invokes Allah for his Muslim brother in his absence, the angels retort and the same to you.

* Any group of people who celebrates the praise of Allah will have the angels spread their wings over them, Allah's mercy covers them, tranquility descends on them, and Allah mentions them to those around Him.

* No Muslim is afflicted with any harm, like a sickness or some other, but that Allah sheds his sins because of it as a tree sheds its leaves.

* A father cannot give his son anything better than refined manners and fine education.

* Anything I have, I will not withhold from you. The one who is contented with what he has, Allah will make him self-sufficient, while he who tries to be patient, Allah will bestow patience upon him. And none is given a gift better and more ample than patience itself.

* Whoever wishes to be granted more wealth and an extended lease of life, should keep good relations with his blood relatives.

* Part of someone's being a good Muslim, is his leaving alone that which does not concern him.

* The one who points out the way to do a good deed is rewarded the same as the one who does it.

* Whoever invites others to guidance will be rewarded the same as the ones who follow him without their rewards being diminished. And whoever invites others to an aberration will bear the punishment of a sin equal to the sins committed by those who follow him without theirs diminishing in any way.

* Whoever plants a tree which then bears fruit, whatever a human or any of Allah's creation eats from it will be considered as a charity for him.

* The one who has wronged his brother should seek for his pardon before his death, as in the Hereafter, there will be neither dinar nor dirham to compensate with it. Thus some of his good deeds will be taken from him and given to his brother. If he has no good deeds, some of the bad deeds of his brother are taken from him, and added to his account.

* Whoever comes to you when you are united, wanting to break your unity, kill him.

* When Allah desires good for a person, he bestows on him religious knowledge.

* A faithful believer is to a faithful believer like the parts of a building, reinforcing one another.

* A person will be with those whom he loves.

* A Muslim is one who does not harm Muslims with his tongue or his hands. The believer is the one whom people can entrust with their lives and their goods and a Muhajir (an immigrant who emigrates to safeguard his faith) is the one who abandons all that Allah has forbidden.

* A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim, he does not oppress him nor does he hand him over to his enemy. Whoever fulfills the needs of his brother, Allah will also fulfill his needs. Whoever brings a Muslim out of a difficulty, Allah will save him from one of the difficulties on the Day of Resurrection. And whoever screens a Muslim, Allah will shield him on the Day of Resurrection.

* May Allah brighten the face of someone who has heard something I said and has conveyed it as he heard it, for sometimes a person to whom something is conveyed may comprehend it better than the one who has heard it.

* All the people are children of Adam, and Adam was created of dust.

* By Allah, this life is to the Hereafter, the same as what your finger gathers if dipped into the sea.

* Do not hate or envy or turn away from one another, but be you, O servants of Allah, brothers. It is not permissible for any Muslim to desert his fellow Muslim brother for more than three days.

* Tenderness is that which is taken out from the heart of a wretched man.

* None of you should wish for death because of any calamity that befalls him. If one must wish for death, then he should say, o Allah, let me live so long as life is good for me and take my life if death is better for me.

* None of you will have faith untill he loves Me more than his children, father and all of mankind.

* None of you have true faith until he wishes for his Muslim brother what he wishes for himself.

* A believer is not a slanderer, a curser, an abuser, nor an impudent man.

* Make easy to people things concerning religious matters and do not make them hard for humanity, give glad tidings and do not let them reject Islam.

* Young man! Be mindful of Allah and Allah will protect you. Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, ask of Allah Most High and if you seek help, seek of Allah, to whom belongs all might and majesty.

* The upper hand is better than lower hand, for the upper hand is that of the giver and the lower hand is that of the beggar.

* Fear Allah and treat your children equally.

* Allah likes most perpetual deeds however minimal.

* Whenever you go to bed, perform your ablution the way you do it for prayer, then lie down on your right side and say "O Allah! I have surrendered my fate to You, I have entrusted all my affairs to You and I have depended on You. There is no refuge and no asylum from You except with You. O Allah! I believe in Your Book which You have revealed and in Your Prophet whom You have sent."

* Performing ablution perfectly constitutes one half of faith. "Praise be to Allah" fills the scale, Glorification (of Allah) and Takbir (saying Allah is most High) fill the heavens and the earth. Prayer is light, obligatory charity is proof (of faith), patience is brightness, and the Qur'an is an argument for or against you. And every morning, each person goes selling his soul, selling it (to Allah or to Satan) so he will either set it free or will enslave it.

* When one of you suffers a calamity, he should say, "To Allah we belong and to Him we shall return. O Allah, I seek reward from you for my affliction, so compensate me for it and grant me something better than that as its substitute".

* When any of you starts eating, let him mention the name of Allah Most High. If he forgot to do so at the beginning of the meal, when he remembers, he should say, "In the name of Allah at its beginning and at its end."

* When any of you leads the people in prayer, he should shorten it, for among them are the young, the old, the weak, the sick, and the one preoccupied with his affairs. But when he prays alone, he may prolong his prayer as much as he wishes.

* When a woman gives in charity from her husband's house, reasonably and without waste, she receives the reward of what she has spent and her husband receives his reward for having earned it and the storekeeper will have a similar reward. The reward of one does not decrease those of the others.

* When one of you enters a mosque, let him pray two rak'ats before sitting.

* When the trust is betrayed, wait for the Hour of Judgment. The questioner asked: "O Messenger of Allah, how is the trust betrayed? He said, "When authority is entrusted to those unworthy of it, then wait for the Hour."

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Prophet's (s) Answers to a Bedouin

A bedouin came to the holy prophet Muhammad (s) and asked him some questions.

Bedouin: I wish to be the richest person in the world.

Prophet: Be content and you will be the richest person in the world.

Bedouin: I would like to be the most learned of people.

Prophet: Fear Allah and you will be the most learned of people.

Bedouin: I would like to be the most just of people.

Prophet: Desire for others what you would like for yourself and you would be the most just of people.

Bedouin: I would like to be the best of people.

Prophet: Be good to others and you will be the best of people.

Bedouin: I would like to be the most honorable of people.

Prophet: If you do not complain to any fellow humans you will be the most honorable of people.

Bedouin: I wish to be safe from Allah's Wrath on the Day of Judgment.

Prophet: If you do not lose your temper with any of your fellow humans, you will be safe from Allah's wrath on the Day of Judgment.

Bedouin: What are the worst evils in the sight of Allah?

Prophet: Hot temper and miserliness (i.e. selfishness with money).

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The Prophet's Advice to Abu Dharr

Abu al Aswad said, "I had arrived at al Rabdha and I met Abu Dharr Jundib son of Janada (a) and he narrated to me." "I entered one day in the midday in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (s) in his masjid. I didn't see anyone at all in the masjid except the Messenger of Allah (s) and Ali (s) who was sitting by his side, so I took the opportunity of the emptiness of the masjid (to approach the Prophet (s))." I said, " Oh RasulAllah (s) , by my father and mother, please advise me with such advice that Allah will benefit me by it."

So he said,"Yes, and how noble you are Oh Abu Dharr! Most surely You are from us, the Ahl Al Bait (a), and I am giving You advise so remember it, for surely it is the collection of (all) the paths of goodness. Surely if You memorize them and put them into practice (hafiztaha), You will have by it `Kiflan'." (Two folds of mercy, in this world and the hereafter)

Oh Abu Dharr! "Worship Allah as if You see Him and if You weren't seeing Him (You must understand that) surely He sees You. Know You that the first of worship of Allah is (Ma'rifa) gnosis, for He is surely the first before every other thing, so there is nothing before Him, The single most without any second, the continuing but not to an end. He is the Creator of the heavens and earth and whatever is in them and between them and He is the Subtle, the Aware, and He has power over all things; then (the second most important factor in the worship of God is) belief in me and acknowledgment that Allah sent me to all of humanity as a bearer of glad tidings, a warner, a caller (of people) to Allah by His permission and a illuminating torch of light; Then (the third most important factor in God's worship is) the love of the people of my house, Those from whom Allah has removed (from them) every impurity and purified them a perfect purification.(al-Ahzab 33:33)

"You must know Abu Dharr that Allah, the Great and Majestic, has made the `Ahl al Bait' in my nation the likeliness of the ship of Nuh (Noah) whoever rides it is saved and whoever desires other than it is drowned. He has made them the likeliness of the Gate of Jericho among the Banu Israel, whoever enters the gate is safe.

Oh Abu Dharr! "Safeguard what I am advising You, You will be happy in this world and next."

Oh Abu Dharr! There are two blessings seriously taken for granted (misused) by mankind, health and spare time.

Oh Abu Dharr! Take advantage of five things before five things seize you; Your youth before Your old age, your health before your sickness, Your wealth before your poverty, your spare time before your being busy and your life before you death.

Oh Abu Dharr! Beware of Procrastination for you are (in) today and not (in) tomorrow. If there is a tomorrow for you, be tomorrow as you are today. If there isn't a tomorrow for you, you will grievously regret the opportunity you missed today.

Oh Abu Dharr! How many a person there is who has met a day he didn't complete! How many a waiter there is of tomorrow who doesn't find it!

Oh Abu Dharr! Had you known the exact period of time you will live you would hate hopes and their deception.

Oh Abu Dharr! Be in the world as if you are a stranger or like one simply passing by as in a journey and count yourself as among the people of the graves.

Oh Abu Dharr! When you wake up in the morning don't talk to yourself about tonight and when night has come don't worry of the mourning for surely you don't know what your state will be tomorrow.

Oh Abu Dharr! Beware that may not over take you a fatal accident during stumbling. The stumbling will not be averted. It will not be possible to return (to correct your mistake). Will not praise you the one you left behind of what you left behind. Will not excuse you, the one you will meet (Allah), of what you were so busy conducting (in the world, carelessly).

Oh Abu Dharr! Be greedier, in terms of your time (life span) more than of your gold and silver coins (wealth).

Oh Abu Dharr! Does any of you wait for but wealth that will make him oppressive or poverty that will make him a forgotten thing or sickness that will destroy or old age that will not permit him to do anything but sit, or death that will finish him off, or the great deceiver, Dajjal - surely he is the most evil of those things awaited; or the hour (Day of Judgment) which is more calamitous and bitter. Most surely the worst of men in position with Allah on the Day of Judgment is he who didn't benefit from his knowledge. He who seeks knowledge in order to divert peoples attention towards himself will surely not smell the fragrance of Paradise.

Oh Abu Dharr! He who seeks knowledge to deceive by it others will not even smell the fragrance of Paradise.

Oh Abu Dharr! When you are asked of some knowledge you know not of say, "I do not know!" You will be saved of it's consequences. Don't make judgment of that which you haven't knowledge, you will be saved from the wrath of Allah on the Day of Judgment.

Oh Abu Dharr! There will be a day when a group of people of Paradise will be over a group of people of Hell and they will say, "What has made you enter hell-fire? For surely we entered paradise by you teaching us and your disciplining (educating) us!" They will say, :We used to bid others to do good while we ourselves didn't do it."

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely the rights Allah (s) has over us are greater than his servant can possibly fulfill! Surely the favors of Allah are more than His servants can ever encompass. This is why they pass night and day repenting.

Oh Abu Dharr! You are surely in the passing of night and day where terms are short, deeds are recorded and death comes suddenly. Whoever sows good is on the verge of reaping good and whoever sows evil is on the verge of reaping regret. And for every sower in the like of that which he sowed. Will not pass a slow person even a moment and a greedy person will not reach that

which is not destined for him. Whoever is given good, Allah gave it to him and whoever is protected from evil, then Allah protected him.

Oh Abu Dharr! The pious are the masters. And the learned are the leaders. Keeping their company is increase (in good). Surely the believer sees his sin as if it is a boulder, he fears that it will fall on him and surely the unbeliever sees his sin as if it is a fly passing on his nose.

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely Allah (s), when He wills good for a servant he puts his sins before his two eyes. When he wills bad for a servant he makes him forget his sins.

Oh Abu Dharr! Don't look at the smallness of the sin but look at the one you disobeyed.

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely the believer is stronger in his fleeing from sin than a sparrow when thrown from his nest.

Oh Abu Dharr! He whose words conform with his deed so he is the one who has attained his share. He whose words don't conform with his deed then he is only destroying himself.

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely a man's sustenance is prohibited (from reaching him) because of a sin he did.

Oh Abu Dharr! Leave that which you have nothing to do with. Do not speak of that which does not concern you, and guard your tongue like you guard your money.

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely Allah, glorious is His praise, will enter a people into paradise and will give them until they are weary and above them there will be a people in the highest grades. So when they will look to them they will recognize them so they will say. "Oh our Lord, they are our brothers, we use to be together in the world so why have you favored them over us." So it will be said, "Far from it, far from it! Surely they used to be hungry while you were satiated, they used to be thirsty while you were quenched, they

used to stand (in prayer) while you used to sleep, they used to rise (take a stand) while you used to go low (be passive, relax).

Oh Abu Dharr! Allah, glorious is His praise, has made the pleasure of my eye in Salat, and has made me to love the Salat like food is made loveable to the hungry and water to the thirsty. And surely the hungry one, when he eats, he is satiated and the thirsty one, when he drinks he is quenched but I am not satiated from Salat.

Oh Abu Dharr! Anyone who voluntarily does 12 raka't other than the obligatory, he has a sure right to a house in paradise.

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely, so long as you are in Salat, you are knocking on the door of the Great King, and whoever knocks much on the door of the King it will be opened for him.

Oh Abu Dharr! There is no believer that stands in prayer but falls on him goodness (birr) what is between him and the Throne. And an angel is appointed for him that calls out, "Oh son of Adam, if you knew what there is for you in Salat and who you are calling, you would not turn away.

Oh Abu Dharr! The Salat is the pillar of the religion (deen) and the tongue is greater; and charity wipes out sin and the tongue is greater; and Fasting is a shield against the fire and the tongue is greater; and jihad is nobility and the tongue is greater.

Oh Abu Dharr! A degree in heaven is above a degree (like steps) like what is between the sky and earth. And surely the servant raises his eye and light dazzles it, almost snatching his sight, so he is shocked by it and says, "What is this?" So it is said, "This is the light of your brother." So he will say, "My brother so and so? We use to work together in the world and he has been so much favored over me?" So it will by said, "He surely was better than you in deeds." Then will be put in his heart satisfaction until he is satisfied.

Oh Abu Dharr! This world is the prison of the believer and the paradise of the unbeliever. And no believer wakes up but is grieved in it. And how can he not be grieved in it when Allah has sworn that

it will take him to Hell and He didn't promise him that it will deliver him from it, and that he shall meet (in it) sicknesses and hardships and matters which will anger him and he will be wronged in it and won't be helped. He seeks reward from Allah and continues to be in grief (in it)until he departs from it. And when he departs from it, he attains to comfort and honor.

Oh Abu Dharr! Allah (s), has not been worshipped with a thing like that of length of grief.

Oh Abu Dharr! Whoever is given knowledge which doesn't cause him to cry simply because he has been given knowledge, it will not benefit him. Allah has described the learned and said, "Surely those who were given knowledge before it, when it is recited onto them they fall upon their faces in prostration and they say, "Glory be to our Lord. Surely the promise of Allah shall be done." They fall on their faces crying and they increase in humility.

Oh Abu Dharr! Whoever is able to cry, let him cry. Whoever isn't able to cry then let him have his heart feel sadness and let him try to cry. Surely the hard heart is far from Allah (s), but they don't realize.

Oh Abu Dharr! Allah (s) says, "I will not combine for my servant two fears nor two safeties. So when he feels safe from me in the world, I make him fear on the Day of Judgment. And when he fears me in the world, I give him safety on the Day of Judgment."

Oh Abu Dharr! If a man had the deeds of 70 prophets he would be looked down upon and it is feared that he will not be saved from the evils of the Day of Judgment.

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely the servant will be shown his sins on the Day of Judgment with him who did his sins (also) so he will say, "As for me, I was afraid, feeling anxiety (about my sins) so he will be forgiven.

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely the man does a good deed and he trusts (depends) on it and he (also) does despised deeds until Allah comes to him while angry. Surely the man who does an evil deed

and he is afraid of it (its consequence) he will come safely on the Day of Judgment.

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely the servant commits a sin, so he is made to enter into heaven by it! So I said, "And how is that? By my mother and father Oh Messenger of Allah (s)." He said, "That sin in front of his eyes makes him repentant of it, fleeing to Allah (s) (from it), until he enters heaven!"

Oh Abu Dharr! Smart is the one who subjugates himself and acts for that which is after death, and weak is the one who follows his self and its caprice and then hopes in Allah so many a hope.

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely the first thing which will be removed from this community (Ummat) is safekeeping (amaanat) and humbleness until it will hardly be seen fearful (of God).

Oh Abu Dharr! By Him in whose hand the soul of Muhammad is in (s), if the world was equal, with Allah, to that of a wing of a fly, the unbeliever wouldn't even get from it a glass of water.

Oh Abu Dharr! The world is cursed! Is cursed what is in it except that by which Allah's face is sought. And there is nothing more hateful to Allah than the world. He created it then left it so He didn't look at it and will not look at it until stands the hour (Day of Judgment). And there is nothing more loveable to Allah than faith (Iman) in Him and abandoning of that which He ordered to be abandoned.

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely Allah (s), revealed to my brother Isa (a), "Oh Isa! Don't love the world for surely I don't love it and love the Hereafter for surely it is the house of return."

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely Jibreel (a) came to me with the treasures of the world and said, "Oh Muhammad (s)! This is the treasures of the world (for you) and it will not decrease of your share (in the Hereafter) with your Lord." So I said, "My beloved Jibreel! I have no need of it. When I'm satiated I thank my Lord and when I'm hungry I ask Him."

Oh Abu Dharr! When Allah wants good for a servant He gives him understanding in religion and makes him abstemious in the world and makes him to see his own faults.

Oh Abu Dharr! No servant abstains in the world but Allah causes wisdom to grow in his heart, and causes his tongue to utter it, and gives him insight of the faults of the world and its sickness and its cure and causes him to leave from it safely into the abode of peace.

Oh Abu Dharr! When you see your brother abstaining from worldliness, listen to him for surely he is dictating wisdom. So I said, "Oh Messenger of Allah (s), who is the most abstemious (zahid) of mankind?" So he said, "One who doesn't forget the graves and the deterioration (of the world) and leaves the excess of the adornment of the world and prefers what lasts over that which perishes and he doesn't count tomorrow among his days and counts himself among the dead.

Oh Abu Dharr! Allah didn't reveal to me to amass wealth upon wealth. But He revealed to me, "Glorify with the praise of your Lord and be among the prostrating ones and worship your Lord until comes to you the certainty."

Oh Abu Dharr! I wear coarse clothing, sit on the floor lick my fingers, ride a donkey without a saddle and have someone sit behind me. So whoever does not like my manner, so he is not of me.

Oh Abu Dharr! Love of wealth and honor are stronger in stripping a man of his religion than two ferocious wolves in a cattle pen of sheep; so they attack in it until mourning. So what will remain of it?

So I said, "Oh Messenger of Allah (s), the fearful humble lowly people who remember Allah much, will they be the first among mankind to go to heaven?" So he said, "No. But it will be the poor among the Muslims. They will come outstripping the necks of mankind. Will say to them the Keepers of Heaven, "Like that you are until you are given account of!" So they will say, "About what shall we give account, for by Allah we didn't own anything by which

we could oppress or do justice and we weren't given (wealth) so we could withhold or give (to others) but we worshipped our Lord until He called us so we answered.

Oh Abu Dharr! The world keeps our hearts and bodies busy and Allah will ask us about what we were favored with of His lawful (halal) so what about that which we enjoyed in His unlawful (haram).

Oh Abu Dharr! I surely asked Allah, magnificent is His praise, to make the sustenance of he who loves me sufficient and to give the one who hates me much wealth and children.

Oh Abu Dharr! Blessedness is for those who are abstemious in the world, the longers of the hereafter; they take the earth of Allah as a carpet and its soil as a pillow and its water as perfume. They read the book of Allah lowly and call Him loudly and they cut themselves off from worldliness completely.

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely my Lord has informed me so He said, "By My glory and majesty, no servants attain to crying but I build for them a palace in paradise that no one will be a partner with in it.

So I said, "Oh Messenger of Allah (s), who among the believers is most intelligent?" He said, "those that remember death most and prepare for it in the best way.

On Abu Dharr! When light enters the heart it expands and becomes spacious. I said, "So what is the sign of that by my mother and father, Oh Messenger of Allah (s)."He said, "Turning (one's attention) to the eternal abode and keeping aloof from the abode of deception and preparation for death before it takes place."

Oh Abu Dharr! Fear Allah and don't show mankind that you fear Allah so they honor you while your heart is evil.

Oh Abu Dharr! Let there be for you in everything a pious intention, even when it comes to sleeping and eating.

Oh Abu Dharr! You must magnify the majesty of Allah in your heart. So don't remember him like the ignorant remembers Him in the presence of a dog saying, "Oh Allah disgrace him" and in the presence of a pig "Oh Allah disgrace him."

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely Allah has angels who are standing out of fear of Him. They won't raise their heads until the trumpet shall be blown, the sounding of the Hereafter. So they will all say, "Glory be to You our Lord, and Your praise. We haven't worshipped you as it is fit for You to be worshipped!"

Oh Abu Dharr! If a man had the deeds of 70 prophets he would deem his deeds small because of the hardship he will see on that day. If a bucket of two baths were poured in the rising place of the sun it would cause to boil, the skulls of those who are witnessing its setting. And if Hell only exhaled one sigh, no near angel nor messenger sent would remain but would fall prostrate on his knees saying, "Lord have mercy on my soul," until he will forget Ibrahim and Ishaq and say, "My Lord, I am your Khaleel Ibrahim, so don't forget me!"

Oh Abu Dharr! If a woman of the people of paradise rose from the sky of the world in the darkest night she would illuminate the earth more than the moon does when it is full and would notice the fragrance she emits, all the people of the earth. And if a cloth of the garments of the people of paradise was spread today in the world, would faint who ever looks at it because of what their eyes are beholding.

Oh Abu Dharr! Lower your voice during a funeral, during fighting and during the recitation of the Qur'an.

Oh Abu Dharr! When you are in a funeral procession, so let your mind be busy in pondering and humbleness and know that you will meet the same fate.

Oh Abu Dharr! Know that when something gets spoiled then salt is its remedy and when the salt is spoiled there is no remedy for it. And know you that in you are two (dangerous) qualities; laughing at something not amusing and laziness when not tired.

Oh Abu Dharr! Two moderate cycles of prayer (rak'at) with pondering is better than standing all night in prayer with a neglectful heart.

Oh Abu Dharr! The truth is heavy and bitter and the falsehood in light and sweet and it may be that the (fulfillment of the) desire of an hour will yield a long period of grief.

Oh Abu Dharr! A man has not fully understood until he sees mankind next to Allah as camels, then he looks to himself and holds himself more contemptible.

Oh Abu Dharr! You will not reach the reality of faith until you see all of mankind as fools in regards to their religion (deen) and intelligent in regards to their worldly matters (dunya).

Oh Abu Dharr! Take account of yourself before you're taken account of so your accounting will be easier tomorrow. And weigh yourself before you are weighed and prepare for the great staging; the day you will be presented, not the least of a hidden thing of you will be hidden from Allah.

Oh Abu Dharr! Be shy of Allah for surely by the One who my soul is in His hand, I always feel embarrassed when I go to the bathroom; I cover myself with my cloths because of the two angels with me.

Oh Abu Dharr! Would you like to enter heaven? I said, "Yes, may my father by sacrificed for thee." He said (s), "So cut your hopes short and put death before your eyes and feel shy of Allah, the shyness due to Him." He said, I said, "Oh Messenger of Allah, all of us feel shy of Allah." He said, "That is not shyness; rather shyness is to not forget the graves and deterioration and protecting your stomach and what concerns it and the head and what it contains and whoever wants the honor of the Hereafter, so let him leave the embellishments of the worldly life. So if you are like that, you have attained the Kingdom (walayat) of Allah."

Oh Abu Dharr! Some supplication with good deeds is sufficient just as some salt is sufficient with food.

Oh Abu Dharr! The one who supplicates without deed is like one who tries to shoot his arrow without a string on his bow.

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely Allah, because of the goodness of his servant, He betters the condition of his whole family and even his neighbors and the houses around him so long as he is with them.

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely your Lord (s) boasts to the angels about three people: A man who is in a deserted place (though alone), he calls azan and iqamat and he prays. So your Lord says to the angels, "Look at my servant! He's praying and no one sees him but me." So descends 70,000 angels and pray behind him and they seek forgiveness for him until the next day; and a man who stands in the mid of night and prays alone and does sajdah (prostrates) and falls asleep while prostrating. So Allah (s) says, "Look to my servant! His soul is with me and his body is prostrate" and a man who is in a war and all his companions flee, but he stays firm fighting until he is killed.

Oh Abu Dharr! No man puts his forehead (in prostration) in a place of the places of the earth but that place bears witness of that for him on the Day of Judgment. There is no place that a people visit but that place starts either sending salutation on them or cursing them.

Oh Abu Dharr! There is no place of lodging or departure of the places of the earth but they call one another, "Oh neighbor, did anyone pass by you who remembered Allah or worshipped by placing his forehead on you in prostration to Allah?" So one says yes and one says no. When one says yes, it shakes and opens up (in happiness) and sees that it has (been favored) a greater rank over its neighbor.

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely Allah, when He created the earth and created what's in it of trees; there was no tree that the children of Adam came to but they got from it a benefit. The earth and the trees remained like that until the evil of the children of Adam started saying the grievous utterance. Their saying, "Allah has taken a son." So when they said it the earth trembled and the benefits of the trees went away.

Oh Abu Dharr! The earth cries over the believer when he dies for forty mornings.

Oh Abu Dharr! When a servant is in a deserted place and does wudu or tayammum then he does Azan and Iqamat and he prays. Allah (s) orders the angels, so they form a row behind him where the two ends of the row are not seen. They bow with his bowing and prostrate with his prostrating and say Ameen for his supplications.

Oh Abu Dharr! Whoever does Iqamah without Azan, no one prays with him but the two angels with him.

On Abu Dharr! No youth leaves the world and he spent his youth in obedience to Allah but Allah gives him the reward of 72 Siddiq (truthful near servants).

Oh Abu Dharr! A remember (of Allah) among the careless is like a warrior among the fleeing.

Oh Abu Dharr! A pious gathering is better than being alone and being alone and being alone is better than an evil gathering and speaking good is better than silence and silence is better than speaking evil.

Oh Abu Dharr! Don't accompany but a believer and let no one eat your food but a pious person and don't eat the food of the evil doers.

Oh Abu Dharr! Give your food to eat to one who you love for Allah and eat the food of one who loves you for Allah (s).

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely Allah (s) is with the tongue of every speaker. So let every man fear Allah and know what he is saying.

Oh Abu Dharr! Leave excessive speech and is enough for you what you reach by it your need.

Oh Abu Dharr! It is enough for a man as a lie to say everything he hears.

Oh Abu Dharr! There is nothing more deserving of being imprisoned for (in Hell) than the tongue.

Oh Abu Dharr! It is of respect to Allah to honor an old Muslim man, and to honor a carrier of the Qur'an who acts by it, and to honor a just ruler.

Oh Abu Dharr! Has not acted, the one who has not guarded his tongue.

Oh Abu Dharr! Do not be a seeker of faults (in others) nor a person who over praises (others in their face), nor a defamer nor a wrangler.

Oh Abu Dharr! A servant continues to increase in distance from Allah so long as his behavior is bad.

Oh Abu Dharr! A good word (of advise) is sadaqah (charity) and every step you take towards Salat is (also) sadaqah.

Oh Abu Dharr! Whoever answers the caller of Allah and does well in inhabiting the masjids of Allah, his reward from Allah is paradise.

So I said, "May my father and mother be sacrificed for you Oh Messenger of Allah (s). How should the masjids of Allah be inhabited?"

He said, "Voices should not be raised in them and useless matters should not be discussed in them and things should not be bought and sold in them. Leave foolish talk so long as you are in them and if you don't, so don't blame on the Day of Judgment but yourself."

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely Allah (s) gives, so long as you're sitting in the masjid, for every breath taken in it, a degree in paradise. And the angels send blessings on you, and will be written for you for every breath you take in it ten good deeds and will be wiped out from you ten evil deeds.

Oh Abu Dharr! Do you know the reason concerning which this verse was revealed? "Be patient and exhort others to be patient

and connect and fear Allah that you may be successful." I said, "I don't know. May my father and mother be sacrificed for you." He said, "In waiting for the next Salat after every Salat."

Oh Abu Dharr! Doing wudu well during difficulties is among the things that wipe out sins, and frequenting the masjids, that is connecting.

Oh Abu Dharr! Allah (s) says, "Surely the most beloved of the servants to me are they that love each other for my sake; they whose hearts are attached to the masjids and the seekers of forgiveness at dawn. They are the ones that when I want to punish the people of the earth, I remember them, so I avert the punishment from them."

Oh Abu Dharr! Every sitting in the masjid is a waste except three; the recitation of one offering prayers, the remembrance of Allah, and the asking of knowledge.

Oh Abu Dharr! Be more concerned about doing deeds with piety than just doing deeds. Because it is not deemed little, that which is done with piety. And how can a deed be deemed little which is accepted? Allah (s) says, "Allah only accepts from the pious."

Oh Abu Dharr! A man can’t be among the pious until his accounting of himself is stronger than the accounting a (business) partner takes of his partner. So he knows from where his food comes from and from where his drink comes from and from where his cloths come from; from a lawful means or from a prohibited one.

Oh Abu Dharr! Whoever doesn't care from where he earns his money, Allah (s) doesn't care from where He will enter him into Hell.

Oh Abu Dharr! Whoever it pleases that he may be the most honorable of mankind, let him fear Allah.

Oh Abu Dharr! The most beloved of you to Allah, magnificent is His praise, is the one who remembers Him most. And the most

honorable of you to Allah is the most pious among you, and the most saved of you from the punishment of Allah is the strongest of you in awe of Him.

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely the God-fearing are they who are careful concerning those things which people are not generally concerned with, out of fear of falling into that which is doubtful.

Oh Abu Dharr! Whoever obeys Allah has remembered Him even if his prayers, fasting and recitation of Qur'an is little.

Oh Abu Dharr! The king of religion is piety and its crown is obedience.

Oh Abu Dharr! Be pious! You will be the best in worship among mankind and the best of your religion is piety.

Oh Abu Dharr! The Virtue of knowledge is greater than that of worship. And know you that if you prayed until your back becomes bent and you fasted until you became thin as strings, that would not benefit you unless it is done with piety.

Oh Abu Dharr! Surely the people of piety and abstinence in this world, they are the real friends of Allah.

Oh Abu Dharr! Whoever does not come on the day of Judgment with three qualities he has surely lost.

So I said, "What are the three, may my mother and father be sacrificed for you?"

He said, "Piety that prevents him from that which Allah the Great and Majestic has made haraam for him, and clemency (hilm) by which he refutes the ignorance of the fools and good manners (Khuluq) with which he deals with the people.

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Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) Last Sermon

[This sermon was delivered on the Ninth Day of Dhul-Hijjah 10 A.H. in the 'Uranah valley of Mount Arafat' in Mecca.]

After praising and thanking Allah the Prophet (saws) said:

"O People, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore listen to what I am saying very carefully and take these words to those who could not be present here today.

O People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as Sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you.

Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and that he will indeed reckon your deeds. Allah has forbidden you to take usury (interest), therefore all interest obligations shall henceforth be waived. Your capital is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity. Allah has judged that there shall be no interest and that all the interest due to Abbas ibn 'Abd'al Muttalib *[the Prophet's uncle]* be waived.

Every right arising out of homicide in pre-Islamic days is henceforth waived and the first such right that i waive is that arising from the murder of Rabiah ibn al Harithibn.

O People, the unbelievers indulge in tampering with the calendar in order to make permissible that which Allah forbade, and to forbid that which Allah has made permissible.

With Allah the months are twelve in number. Four of them are holy, three of these are successive and one occurs singly between the months of Jumada and Shaban.

Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope of that he will be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.

O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women but they also have rights over you.

Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah's trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right, then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with anyone of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.

O People, listen to me in earnest, worship Allah, say your five daily prayers, fast during the month of Ramadhan, and give your wealth in Zakat. Perform Hajj if you can afford to.

All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over a white - except by piety and good action.

Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not therefore do injustice to yourselves.

Remember one day you will meet Allah and answer your deeds. So beware: do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.

O People, no prophet or apostle will come after me, and no new faith will be born.

Reason well, therefore, O People, and understand my words which I convey to you.

I leave behind me two things, the **Qur'an** and my `Itrat (Household) and if you follow these you will never go astray.

All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly.

Be my witness, O Allah, that I have conveyed Your message to Your people."

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CHAPTER THREE

Imam Ali

Imam Ali (a.s.)

(598 AD – 661 AD)

Alī ibn Abī Tlib (a.s.) was born in Meccah about 598 A.D., i.e. 23 years before the Hijra (Migration), in the precincts of the Holy Ka'bah. His father, Abu Talib, was the custodian of the Kaaba and a sheikh of the Banu Hashim, a branch of the Quraysh tribe. Abu Talib ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib was also an uncle of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). His mother, Fatimah the daughter of Asad, also belonged to Banu Hashim, making Ali a descendant of Ishmael, the son of Ibrahim. When Ali was five or six years old, a famine occurred in and around Mecca, affecting the economic conditions of Ali's father, who had a large family to support. Muhammad took Ali into his home to raise him. When Prophet Muhammad reported receiving a divine revelation, Imam Ali declared Islam at age 10 and he was among the first to accept his message, dedicating his life to the cause of Islam. During the hard time of Islam and the persecution of Muslims and boycott of the Banu Hashim in Mecca, Ali stood firmly in support of Islam and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Imam Ali migrated to Medina shortly after Prophet Muhammad. There Prophet Muhammad told Imam Ali that he had been ordered by God to give his daughter, Fatimah, to Ali in marriage. For the ten years that Prophet Muhammad led the community in Medina, Imam Ali was extremely active in his service, leading parties of warriors on battles, and carrying messages and orders. Imam Ali took part in almost all the battles fought in defense of the

early Muslim community. As Prophet Muhammad was returning from his last pilgrimage in 632, he made statements about Imam Ali that are interpreted very differently by Sunnis and Shias. He halted the caravan at *Ghadir Khumm*, gathered the returning pilgrims for communal prayer and began to address them: "…I am leaving among you two weighty things: the one being the Book of Allah in which there is right guidance and light, so hold fast to the Book of Allah and adhere to it. The second are the members of my household I remind you (of your duties) to the members of my family." Then he called *Ali ibn Abi Talib* to his sides, took his hand and raised it up declaring: "…For whoever I am a Mawla of, then Ali is his Mawla,"

Prophet Muhammad's death in 632 signaled disagreement over who would succeed him as leader of the Muslim community. Imam Ali was considered by Sunni Muslims as the fourth and final of the Rashidun (rightly guided Caliphs), who was appointed caliph by the Prophet's companions in Medina after the third caliph. However, he was regarded as the first Imam by Shi'a Muslims. Accordingly, Imam Ali (as) and his descendant Imams are regarded as the rightful successors to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), all of which are members of the Ahlul-Bayt, the household of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Imam Ali was caliph between 656 and 661, during one of the more turbulent periods in Muslim history. On the 19th of Ramadan, while Ali was praying in the mosque of Kufa, a Kharijite assassinated him with a stroke of his poison-coated sword. Ali, wounded by the poisonous sword, lived for two days before dying in Kufa on the 21st of Ramadan in 661. In Muslim view, Imam Ali (a.s.) is respected for his courage, knowledge, belief, honesty, unbending devotion to Islam, deep loyalty to Prophet Muhammad, equal treatment of all Muslims and generosity in forgiving his defeated enemies, and therefore is central to mystical traditions moral discipline in Islam. Imam Ali preserves his prominence as an authority on Qur'anic exegesis, Islamic jurisprudence and religious thought. Imam Ali's influence has thus continued throughout Islamic history. In what follows, some selected sermons and wise maxims are given of the Imam Ali's teaching with regard to the area of moral conducts and ethical values.

Nahjul-Balaghah: Attributes of Pious People

Sermon 139

It is related that a companion of Amir al-mu'minin called Hammam who was a man devoted to worship said to him, "O' Amir al-mu'minin, describe to me the pious man in such a way as though I see them." Amir al-mu'minin avoided the reply and said, "O' Hammam, fear Allah and perform good acts because 'Verily, Allah is with those who guard (themselves against evil), and those who do good (to others)'" (Qur'an, 16:128). Hammam was not satisfied with this and pushed him to speak. Thereupon, Amir al-mu'minin praised Allah and extolled Him and sought His blessings on the Holy Prophet and then spoke:

Now then, Allah the Glorified, the Sublime, created (the things of) creation. He created them without any need for their obedience or being safe from their sinning, because the sin of anyone who sins does not harm Him nor does the obedience of anyone who obeys Him benefit Him. He has distributed among them their livelihood, and has assigned them their positions in the world.

Thus, the God-fearing, in it are the people of distinction. Their speech is to the point, their dress is moderate and their gait is humble. They keep their eyes closed to what Allah has made unlawful for them, and they put their ears to that knowledge which is beneficial to them. They remain in the time of trials as though they remain in comfort. If there had not been fixed periods (of life) ordained for each, their spirits would not have remained in their

bodies even for the twinkling of an eye because of (their) eagerness for the reward and fear of chastisement. The greatness of the Creator is seated in their heart, and, so, everything else appears small in their eyes. Thus to them Paradise is as though they see it and are enjoying its favors. To them, Hell is also as if they see it and are suffering punishment in it.

Their hearts are grieved, they are protected against evils, their bodies are thin, their needs are scanty, and their souls are chaste. They endured (hardship) for a short while, and in consequence they secured comfort for a long time. It is a beneficial transaction that Allah made easy for them. The world aimed at them, but they did not aim at it. It captured them, but they freed themselves from it by a ransom.

During a night they are upstanding on their feet reading portions of the Qur'an and reciting it in a well-measured way, creating through it grief for themselves and seeking by it the cure for their ailments. If they come across a verse creating eagerness (for Paradise) they pursue it avidly, and their spirits turn towards it eagerly, and they feel as if it is in front of them. And when they come across a verse which contains fear (of Hell) they bend the ears of their hearts towards it, and feel as though the sound of Hell and its cries are reaching their ears. They bend themselves from their backs, prostrate themselves on their foreheads, their palms, their knees and their toes, and beseech Allah, the Sublime, for their deliverance. During the day they are enduring, learned, virtuous and God-fearing. Fear (of Allah) has made them thin like arrows. If any one looks at them he believes they are sick, although they are not sick, and he says that they have gone mad. In fact, great concern (i.e., fear) has made them mad.

They are not satisfied with their 106eager good acts, and do not regard their major acts as great. They always blame themselves and are afraid of their deeds. When anyone of them is spoken of highly, he says: "I know myself better than others, and my Lord knows me better than I know. O' Allah do not deal with me according to what they say, and make me better than they think of me and forgive me (those shortcomings) which they do not know."

The peculiarity of anyone of them is that you will see that he has strength in religion, determination along with leniency, faith with conviction, eagerness in (seeking) knowledge in forbearance, moderation in riches, devotion in worship, gracefulness in starvation, endurance in hardship, desire for the lawful, pleasure in guidance and hatred from greed. He performs virtuous deeds but still feels afraid. In the evening he is anxious to offer thanks (to Allah). In the morning his anxiety is to remember (Allah). He passes the night in fear and rises in the morning in joy – fear lest night is passed in forgetfulness, and joy over the favor and mercy received by him. If his self refuses to endure a thing which it does not like he does not grant its request towards what it likes. The coolness of his eye lies in what is to last for ever, while from the things (of this world) that will not last he keeps aloof. He transfuses knowledge with forbearance, and speech with action.

You will see his hopes simple, his shortcomings few, his heart fearing, his spirit contented, his meal small and simple, his religion safe, his desires dead and his anger suppressed. Good alone is expected from him. Evil from him is not to be feared. Even if he is found among those who forget (Allah) he is counted among those who remember (Him), but if he is among the rememberers he is not counted among the forgetful. He forgives him who is unjust to him, and he gives to him who deprives him. He behaves well with him who behaves ill with him.

Indecent speech is far from him, his utterance is lenient, his evils are non-existent his virtues are ever present, his good is ahead and mischief has turned its face (from him). He is dignified during calamities, patient in distresses, and thankful during ease. He does not commit excess over him whom he hates, and does not commit sin for the sake of him whom he loves. He admits truth before evidence is brought against him. He does not misappropriate what is placed in his custody, and does not forget what he is required to remember. He does not call others bad names, he does not cause harm to his neighbor, he does not feel happy at others misfortunes, he does not enter into wrong and does not go out of right.

If he is silent his silence does not grieve him, if he laughs he does not raise his voice, and if he is wronged he endures till Allah takes

revenge on his behalf. His own self is in distress because of him, while the people are in ease from him. He puts himself in hardship for the sake of his next life, and makes people feel safe from himself. His keeping away from others is by way of asceticism and purification, and his nearness to those to whom he is near is by way of leniency and mercifulness. His keeping away is not by way of vanity or feeling of greatness, nor his nearness by way of deceit and cheating.

It is related that Hammam passed into a deep swoon and then expired. Then Amir al-mu'minin said:

Verily, by Allah I had this fear about him. *Then he added:* Effective advices produce such effects on receptive minds.

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Nahjul Balaghah: A Letter to Maalik Ashtar

Maalik al-Ashtar was a famous companion of Imam Ali (a). He was the head of the Bani Nakha'i clan. He was a faithful disciple of Imam Ali (a). Imam Ali (a) had specially taught him the principles of administration and jurisprudence.

The following instructions in the form of a letter were written to him by Imam Ali (a) who appointed him as the Governor of Egypt in place of Muhammad bin Abi Bakr:

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL.

These are the orders issued by the creature of Allah, Ali, the son Abu Taalib (a) to Maalik, the son of Ashtar when he appointed Maalik as the Governor of Egypt to collect Zakat there, to combat the enemies of Islam and Egypt, to work for the welfare of its people and to look after its prosperity.

I order you, Maalik, always to keep the fear of Allah in your mind, to give priority to His worship and to give preference to obeying His Commands over every other thing in life, to carefully and faithfully follow the commandments and interdictions as are given by the

Holy Book and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (s) because the success of a man to attain happiness in this world and in the next depends upon these qualities, and a failure to achieve these attributes brings about total failure in both the worlds.

I order you to use your head, heart, hands and tongue to help the creatures of Allah because the Almighty Allah holds Himself responsible to help those who sincerely try their best to help Him. Allah has further ordered you to keep your desires under control, to keep yourself under restraint when extravagant and inordinate yearnings and cravings try to drive you towards vice and wickedness because usually your 'self' tries to incite and drag you towards infamy and damnation unless the Merciful Lord comes to your help.

Let it be known to you, Maalik, that I am sending you as a governor to a country which has seen many regimes before this. Some of them were benign, sympathetic and good, while others were tyrannical, oppressive and cruel. People will judge your regime as critically as you have studied the activities of other regimes and they will criticize you in the same way as you have censured or approved other rulers.

You must know that a good and virtuous man is known and recognized by the good that is said about him and the praise which Allah has destined him to receive from others. Therefore, make your mind the source and fountain-head of good thoughts, good intentions and good deeds. This can only be attained by keeping a strict control on your desires and yearnings, however much they may try to incite and coerce you. Remember that the best way to do justice to your inner self and to keep it out of harm is to restrain it from vice and from things which the 'self' inordinately and irrationally desires.

Maalik! You must create in your mind kindness, compassion and love for your subjects. Do not behave towards them as if you are a voracious and ravenous beast and as if your success lies in devouring them.

Remember, Maalik, that amongst your subjects there are two kinds of people: those who have the same religion as you have; they are brothers to you, and those who have religions other than that of yours, they are human beings like you. Men of either category suffer from the same weaknesses and disabilities that human beings are inclined to, they commit sins, indulge in vices either intentionally or foolishly and unintentionally without realizing the enormity of their deeds. Let your mercy and compassion come to their rescue and help in the same way and to the same extent that you expect Allah to show mercy and forgiveness to you.

Maalik! You must never forget that if you are a ruler over them than the caliph is the ruler over you and Allah is the Supreme Lord over the caliph. And the reality is that He has appointed you as the governor and tested you through the responsibility of this rulership over them.

Never think of raising yourself to such a false prestige that you can declare war against Allah because you cannot ward off His Wrath and you can never be free from the need of His Mercy and Compassion.

Do not feel ashamed to forgive and forget. Do not hurry over punishments and do not be pleased and do not be proud of your power to punish. Do not get angry and lose your temper quickly over the mistakes and failures of those over whom you rule. On the contrary, be patient and sympathetic with them. Anger and desire of vengeance are not going to be of much help to you in your administration.

Never say to yourself, "I am their Lord, their ruler and all in all over them and that I must be obeyed submissively and humbly" because such a thought will unbalance your mind, will make you vain and arrogant, will weaken your faith in religion and will make you seek support of any power other than that of Allah . If you ever feel any pride or vanity on account of your sway and rule over your subjects then think of the supreme sway and rule of the Lord over the Universe, the extent of His creations, the supremacy of His Might and Glory, His Power to do things which you cannot even dream of doing and His control over you which is more dominating than that

which you can ever achieve over anything around you. Such thoughts will cure your mental weakness, will keep you away from vanity and rebellion (against Allah), will reduce your arrogance and haughtiness and will take you back to the sanity which you had foolishly deserted.

Take care never to think of bringing yourself at par with Allah, never to think of matching your power with Him and contesting His Glory and ever to pretend that you possess might and power like Him because the Mighty Lord will always humble pitiless tyrants and will degrade all pretenders of His Power and Might.

So far as your own affairs or those of your relatives and friends are concerned take care that you do not violate the duties laid down upon you by Allah and do not usurp the rights of mankind, be impartial and do justice to them because if you give up equity and justice then you will certainly be a tyrant and an oppressor. And whoever tyrannizes and oppresses the creatures of Allah, will earn enmity of Allah along with the hatred of those whom he has oppressed; and whoever earns the Wrath of Allah loses all chances of salvation and he has no excuse to offer on the Day of Judgment.

Every tyrant and oppressor is an enemy of Allah unless he repents and gives up oppression. Remember, Maalik! that there is nothing in this world more effective to turn His Blessings into His Wrath quicker than to insist upon oppression over His creatures because the Merciful Allah will always hear the prayers of those who have been oppressed and He will give no chance to oppressors.

You must always appreciate and adopt a policy which is neither too severe nor too lenient, a policy which is based upon equity will be largely appreciated. Remember that the displeasure of common men, the have-nots and the depressed persons more overbalances than the approval of important persons, while the displeasure of a few big people will be excused by the Lord if the general public and the masses of your subjects are happy with you.

Remember, Maalik! that usually these big personages are mentally the scum of the human society, they are the people who will be the worst drag upon you during your moments of peace and happiness,

and the least useful to you during your hours of need and adversity, they hate justice the most, they will keep on demanding more and more out of the State resources and will seldom be satisfied with what they receive and will never be obliged for the favor shown to them if their demands are justifiable refused, they will never accept any reasonable excuse or any rational argument and when the time changes, you will never find them staunch, faithful and loyal.

While the common men, the poor and apparently the less important section of your subjects are the pillars of Islam, they are the real assemblage of Muslims and the power and defensive force against the enemies of Islam. Keep your mind on their affairs, be more friendly with them and secure their trust and goodwill.

But be careful in forming your contacts (whether with the most important persons or the commoners); keep such people away from you and think them to be the enemy of the State who are scandal-mongers and who try to find fault with others and carry on propaganda against them because everywhere people have weaknesses and failings and it is the duty of the government to overlook (minor) shortcomings. You must not try to go in search of those weaknesses which are hidden from you, leave them to Allah, and about those weaknesses which come to your notice, you must try to teach them how to overcome them. Try not to expose the weaknesses of the people and Allah will conceal your own weaknesses which you do not want anybody to know.

Do not give cause to the people to envy each other (man against man, tribe against tribe or one section of the society against the other). Try to alleviate and root out mutual distrust and enmity from amongst your subjects.

Be fair, impartial and just in your dealings with all, individually and collectively and be careful not to make your person, position and favors act as sources of malice. Do not let any such thing or such person come near to you who does not deserve your nearness and your favor. Never lower your dignity and prestige.

Remember that backbiters and scandal-mongers belong to a mean and cunning group, though they pretend to be sincere advisers. Do not make haste to believe the news they bring and do not heed to their advice.

Do not accept the advice of misers, they will try their best to keep you away from acts of kindness and from doing good to others. They will make you frightened of poverty.

Similarly do not allow cowards to act as your advisers because they will make you timid in enforcing your orders, will scare you from handling important affairs boldly and will make your enterprises and invasions timid and timorous attempts. At the same time avoid greedy and covetous persons who would aspire to the position of acting as your counselor because he will teach you how to exploit the community and how to oppress people to get their wealth. Remember that miserliness, cowardice and greed appear to be different wicked qualities but they all arise from the same evil mentality of having no faith and no trust in Allah.

Your worst ministers will be the men who had been ministers to the despotic rulers before you and who had been a party o atrocities committed by them. Such persons should not be taken into your confidence and should not be trusted because they have aided sinners and have assisted tyrants and cruel rulers.

In their stead you can comfortably find persons who are equally wise and learned but who have not developed sinful and criminal mentalities, who have neither helped the tyrants in their tyrannies nor have they assisted them to carry on their sinful deeds. Such persons will prove the least troublesome to you. They will be the most helpful. They will sincerely sympathize with you. If you take them in your confidence they will sever their connections with your opponents. Keep such people with you as your companions in your informal company as well as in official gatherings in audience. From amongst such honest and humane companions and ministers some would receive your fullest confidence and trust. They are those who can always speak out the bitter truth to you and unreservedly and without fear of your status, can refuse to assist you or associate

with you in the deeds which Allah does not like His good creatures to commit.

Select honest, truthful and pious people as your companions. Train them not to flatter you and not to seek your favor by false praises because flattery and false praises create vanity and conceit and they make a man lose sight of his real self and ignore his duties.

You should not treat good and bad people alike because in this way you will be discouraging good persons and at the same time emboldening the wicked to carry on their wickedness. Everyone should receive the treatment which his deeds make him deserve.

Try carefully to realize that a ruler can create goodwill in the minds of his subjects and can make them faithful and sincere to him only when he is kind and considerate to them, when he reduces their troubles, when he does not oppress them and when he never asks for things which are beyond their power.

These are the principles which you should keep in mind and act upon. Let your attitude be such that they do not lose faith in you because a good faith on their part will reduce many troubles of administration and will relieve you of many worries and anxieties. And so far as your confidence and trust is concerned, let it rest with those people whom you have tested in difficulties and whom you have befriended, but you should always mistrust those people whom you have wronged or who have proved themselves undeserving, inefficient or unfaithful.

Do not give up those practices and do not break those rules which good Muslims have evolved or introduced before you, which have created unity and amity among the various sections of the society and which have benefited the masses.

Do not break them and do not introduce innovations because if you do away with those good rules and traditions, the reward of having introduced them will go to those who evolved them and the punishment of having despoiled them will be your lot.

You must know, Maalik, that the people over whom you rule are divided into classes and grades and the prosperity and welfare of each class of the society individually and collectively are so interdependent upon the well-being of the other classes that the whole set-up represents a closely woven net and reciprocal aspect. One class cannot exist peacefully, cannot live happily and cannot work without the support and good wishes of the other.

Amongst them there are the soldiers of the army of Allah who defend His cause, the next class is that of the secretaries of the State to whom duties of writing out and issuing special or general orders are assigned, the third group is of the judges and magistrates to administer justice, the fourth is of officers who maintain law and order and guard the peace and prosperity of the country. Then there are common men, the Muslims who pay the taxes levied by the government, and non-Muslims who pay the taxes levied by the government, and non-Muslims who pay tribute to the State (in lieu of taxes). Then comes the class of men who carry on various professions and trades and the last but not the least are the poor and the have-nots who are considered as the lowest class of the society. The Merciful Allah has fixed rights and duties of each one of them. They have been either mentioned in His Book or explained through the instructions of the Holy Prophet (s). A complete code of them is preserved with us.

As far as the soldiers are concerned, they are by the commands of Allah a fortress and stronghold to guard and defend the subjects and the State. They are the ornaments of the ruler and the country. They provide power and protection to the religion. They propagate and preserve peace among mankind. In fact, they are the real guardians of peace and through them good internal administration can be maintained. The upkeep and maintenance of an army depends upon the taxes collected by the State out of which Allah has fixed for them a share. With this amount they provide for their requirements, maintain themselves and their arms in sound position to defend the religion and the cause of justice.

The army and the common men (common citizens who pay taxes or tributes) are two important classes, but in a Welfare State their well-being cannot be guaranteed without proper functioning and

preservation of the other classes, the judges and magistrates, the secretaries of the State and the officers of various departments who collect various revenues, maintain law and order as well as preserve peace and amity among the diverse classes of the society. They also guard the rights and privileges of the citizens and look to the performances of various duties by individuals and classes. And the prosperity of this whole set-up depends upon the traders and industrialists. They act as a medium between the consumers and the suppliers. They collect the requirements of the society. They exert to provide goods. They open up shops, markets and trading centers. Thus providing the consumers with their necessities, they relieve the citizens of the need of running after their requisites of life.

Then comes the class of the poor and the disabled persons. It is absolutely necessary that they should be looked after, helped and well-provided for. The Merciful Allah has explained the ways and means of maintaining and providing for each of these classes. And everyone of this class has the right upon the ruler of the State that at least minimum necessities for its well-being and contented living are provided.

Remember, Maalik that Almighty Allah will not absolve any ruler from his obligations unless he sincerely tries his best to discharge his duties, invokes Allah to help him in their performance, remains steadfast and diligent on the path of truth and justice and bears all this whether the performance of these duties is congenial or hateful to him.

So far as the army is concerned its chief and commander should be a person who is most sincere and faithful to Allah, to the Holy Prophet (s) and to your Imam who is most pious, who is famous for his forbearance, clemency and gentleness, who is neither short-tempered nor does he get angry quickly, who sympathetically treats sincere excuses and accepts apologies, who is kind and compassionate with the weak, but severe against the strong and the powerful, who has no vindictiveness which might lead to violence or any inferiority complex or weak-mindedness which makes them helpless and dejected. To find and select such persons you should have contacts with pious and noble families with high

ideals and exalted traditions, families well-known for their bravery and courage and generosity and magnanimity. They are the people who may be considered as sources of magnificence and sublimity of character and fountain-heads of piety and good deeds.

When you have found and selected such persons then keep an eye over them and watch them as parents watch their children so that you may find out if there appears any change in their behavior. Treat them kindly and sympathetically. Do not grudge highest considerations to them (if they rightly deserve) and do not refuse small mercies. This kind of treatment will create reciprocal tendencies in them and they will trust you and will be faithful to you. Under the impression that you have paid enough attention to their major necessities and wants, do not close your eyes to their minor requirements and needs because small favors often bear better fruits though careful attention to major necessities is very important. Among the military officers those should receive your highest respect and consideration who pay most attention to the needs of the soldiers under their command who come forward to help the soldiers with their personal means and property so that the soldiers may lead a happy and contented life and may have full confidence of the future of their families and children.

If the soldiers are thus satisfied and are free from anxieties and care then they will bravely and wholeheartedly face the conflicts. Your constant attention towards the officers and soldiers will make them love you more and more.

The thing which should most gladden the heart of a ruler is the fact that his State is being ruled on the principles of equity and justice and that his subjects love him. And your subjects will only love you when they have no grievance against you. Their sincerity and loyalty will be proved if they gather around you to support your government, when they accept your authority without considering it an unbearable burden on their heads and when they do not secretly wish your rule to come to an end. So let them have as many justifiable hopes in you as they can and fulfill as many as you reasonably can. Speak well of those who deserve your praise. Appreciate the good deeds done by them and let these good actions be known publicly.

The correct and timely publicity of noble actions and golden deeds creates more zeal in the minds of the brave and emboldens the cowards and the weaklings. You must know and realize the good deeds done by every single individual so that the credit of noble deeds done by one may not be given to another. Do not underestimate and underpay the good work done. Similarly do not overpay a work simply because it has been done by a very important person and do not let his position and prestige be the cause of overvaluation of the merit of his work and at the same time do not undervalue a great deed if it is done by a very ordinary person or a commoner. Let equity, justice and fairplay be your motto.

When you are faced with problems which you cannot solve or with a difficult situation from which you cannot escape or when uncertain and doubtful circumstances confuse and perplex you, then turn to Allah and the Holy Prophet (s) because Allah has thus ordered those whom He wants to guide. The way to turn to Allah is to act diligently according to the clear and explicit orders given in His Holy Book and to the turn to the Holy Prophet (s) means to follow those of his orders about which there is no doubt and ambiguity and which have been generally accepted to be correctly recorded.

So far as dispensing of justice is concerned, you have to be very careful in selecting officers for the same. You must select people of excellent character and high caliber and with meritorious records. They must possess the following qualifications: Abundance of litigations and complexity of cases should not make them lose their temper.

When they realize that they have committed a mistake in judgment they should not insist on it by trying to justify it. When truth is made clear to them or when the right path opens up before them, they should not consider it below their dignity to correct the mistake made or to undo the wrong done by them. They should not be corrupt, covetous or greedy. They should not be satisfied with ordinary enquiry or scrutiny of a case, but should scrupulously go through all the pros and cons, they must examine every aspect of the problem carefully, and whenever and wherever they find

doubtful and ambiguous points, they must stop, go through further details, clear the points, and only then proceed with their decisions. They must attach the greatest importance to reasoning, arguments and proofs. They should not get tired of lengthy discussions and arguments. They must exhibit patience and perseverance in scanning the details, in testing the points presented as true, in sifting facts from fiction and when truth is revealed to them they must pass their judgments without fear, favor or prejudice.

They should not develop vanity and conceit when compliments and praises are showered upon them. They should not be mislead by flattery and cajolery. But unfortunately they are few persons having such characteristics. After you have selected such men to act as your judges, make it a point to go through some of their judgments and to check their proceedings. Pay them handsomely so that their needs are fully satisfied and they are not required to beg or borrow or resort to corruption. Give them such a prestige and position in your State that none of your courtiers or officers can overlord them or bring harm to them. Let judiciary be above every kind of executive pressure or influence, above fear or favor, intrigue or corruption. Take every particular care of this aspect because before your appointment this State was under the sway of corrupt, time-serving and wealth-grasping opportunists who were lewd, greedy and vicious and who wanted nothing out of a State but a sinful consent of amassing wealth and pleasures for themselves.

Then come the officers of your State. You must supervise their work. They must be appointed after a careful scrutiny of their capabilities and characters. These appointments must be made originally on probation without any kind of favoritism being shown or influence being accepted otherwise tyranny, corruption and misrule will reign in your State. While selecting your officers take care to select experienced and honorable persons, members of respectable families who had served Islam during its early days because these are usually of noble character and good repute. They are not greedy and cannot be easily bribed. They mostly have before them the ultimate result of their thoughts and their deeds. Keep them also well-paid so that they may not be tempted to lower their standard of morality and may not misappropriate the cash of the State which they hold in their trust and if after being paid

handsomely they prove dishonest, then you will be right to punish them. Therefore keep a careful watch over their system of work and rule.

You may also appoint trustworthy and honest men to keep a watch over the activities of these officers. The knowledge that they are being watched secretly will keep them away from dishonesty, misrule, malpractice and tyrannizing the subjects. Protect your government from dishonest officers. If you find any of them dishonest and your confidential intelligence service submits acceptable proofs of his dishonesty, then you must punish him. This may be corporal punishment besides dismissal from service and taking back from him all which he has dishonestly collected. He must be humiliated and must be made to realize the infamy of his wicked deeds. His humiliation and punishment must be given publicly so that it may serve as a lesson and a deterrent to others.

So far as collection of land revenues and taxes are concerned you must always keep in view the welfare of the tax-payers which is of primary importance than the taxes themselves because these taxes and the tax-payers are the original sources on which the welfare of your State and its subjects depend.

A State really lives upon the revenues collected from the tax-payers. Therefore, more importance should be attached to the fertility of land than to the collection of taxes because actual taxable capacity of people rests upon the fertility of the land. The ruler, who does not pay attention to the prosperity of his subjects and fertility of the land but concentrates only on collection of revenues, lays waste the land and consequently ruins the State and brings destruction to the creatures of Allah. His rule cannot last for long.

If the tax-payers complain to you of the heavy incidence to taxation, of any accidental calamity, of the vagaries of the monsoons, of the recession of the means of irrigation, of floods or destruction of their crops on account of excessive rainfall and if their complaints are true, then reduce their taxes. This reduction should be such that it provides them opportunities to improve their conditions and eases them of their troubles.

Decrease in State-income due to such reasons should not depress you because the best investment for a ruler is to help his subjects at the time of their difficulties. They are the real wealth of a country and any investment on them even in the form of reduction of taxes, will be returned to the State in the shape of the prosperity of its cities and improvement of the country at large. At the same time you will be in a position to command and secure their love, respect and praises along with the revenues. Will that not be a lasting happiness?

Not only this, but your benign rule and humane treatment will so affect them that they will come to your help at the time of your difficulties and you will be able to rely on their support. Your kindness, your clemency and your justice will be a kind of moral training to them, and the contented, happy and prosperous life, for which they will be grateful to you, will be the best support, strongest protection and the greatest treasury for you.

Later if such circumstances arrive that you find yourself in need of their support, their help, their confidence, their wealth and their man-power, then they will have no grudge against you.

Remember, Maalik! If a country is prosperous and if its people are well-to-do then it will happily and willingly bear any burden.

The poverty of the people is the actual cause of the devastation and ruination of a country and the main cause of the poverty of the people is the desire of its ruler and officers to amass wealth and possessions whether by fair or foul means. They are afraid of losing their posts or positions and sway or rule and want to make the most during the shortest time at their disposal. They never learn any lesson from the history of nations and never pay any attention to the commands of Allah.

You will also have to be very careful about your secretaries. You should entrust your work only to those who are the best among them.

Specially the affairs which are of confidential nature and which deal with secrets, and the security of the State should be entrusted only

to men of noble character because men who are intoxicated with power, position and prestige carry on propaganda and speak against the government in public, they openly misbehave with you and consider themselves so important as to ignore you or your orders in financial transactions essential to the State, they avoid placing necessary papers before you or attending to important correspondence.

Particular care should be taken that when the officers make contracts on behalf of the government or sign agreements, these contracts and agreements are not defective or harmful to the State, if they are negotiating any treaties and alliances they do not overlook or forsake the interests of the State or if they find the State in a weak and embarrassing position on account of unfavorable terms of treaties or due to intrigues, they should be able to find sensible ways out of them. See that they know and realize their proper place and rank, because he who does not realize his place and position will never understand those of others.

One more thing about these officers: You must remember not to select them for very important posts and not to trust them completely simply because you have found them honest, diligent, trustworthy and intelligent and have formed a good opinion about them because there are some people who, when it suits them, pretend honesty, diligence and fidelity and can put on the garb of piety and virtue and thus find their ways in the hearts of the rulers, though actually they are neither honest nor diligent nor wise nor sagacious. Therefore, you must always look to the record or reputation of the services of such men during previous regimes; more importance should be attached to their good reputation. This kind of selection and supervision will prove that you are faithful to Allah and that you wish your Imam well.

Thus you must appoint one officer as the Head of each important branch of your government. He should have knowledge and wisdom enough to cope successfully with all the intricate problems of his department and should be diligent enough to cope with extensive work.

Remember well that if there is any defect in your officers and you are tolerating it, then you and only you are responsible for all those evils.

I want to advise you about your businessmen and industrialists. Treat them well, and order your officers to follow the same policy.

There may be local businessmen carrying on their trade in certain places or those who send their merchandise from one place to another. There may even be those who import and export goods. Similarly there may be industrialists and manufacturers as well as industrial labor or men engaged in the handicrafts. They all deserve sympathy, protection and good treatment.

They all are the sources of wealth to the country. They provide goods for the consumers. Most of these traders carry and convey these goods from across deserts, seas and over open lands and mountains, their consignments are brought from distant lands, often from places which are not easy to approach and where usually people do not care or do not dare to go. These businessmen are usually peace-loving people, not given to mischievous disturbances and seditious fomentation. You must look after their interest and protect them whether they are trading in your cities or towns or whether they are traveling over the countries carrying goods from place to place.

One more thing about these traders and industrialists. While treating them most sympathetically you must keep an eye over there activities as well.

You know they are usually stingy misers, intensely self-centered and selfish, suffering from the obsession of grasping and accumulating wealth.

They often hoard their goods to get more profit out of them by creating scarcity and by indulging in black-marketing. Such a condition is extremely injurious to the public on one hand and disgraceful to the ruler on the other.

You must put a stop to all such practices because the Holy Prophet (s) has explicitly prohibited such practices. Remember that trade should go on between the buyers and sellers according to correct measures and weights and on such reasonable terms that neither the consumers nor the suppliers should have to face losses. But even with all the sympathetic treatments accorded to them and with all the facilities provided to them, if the traders and industrialists carry on hoarding and black-marketing, then you must punish them according to the intensity of their crime.

Then I want to caution you about the poor. Fear Allah about their conditions and you attitude towards them. They have no support, no resources and no opportunities. They are poor, they are destitute and many of them are cripples and unfit for work. Some of them come out begging and some (who maintain self-respect) do not beg, but their conditions speak of their distress, poverty, destitution and wants. For the sake of Allah, Maalik, protect them and their rights. He has laid the responsibility of this upon your shoulders. You must fix a share for them from Baytul Mal (the Government Treasury). Besides this reservation in cash, you must also reserve a share in kind of crops etc. from government granaries in cities where food-grains are stored as are cultivated on State-owned land because in these storage the share of those living far away from any particular city is equal to the share of those living nearby.

Let me remind you once again that you are made responsible for guarding the rights of the poor people and for looking after their welfare. Take care that the conceit of your position and vanity of wealth may not deceive you to lose sight of such a grave and important responsibility. Yours is such an important post that you cannot claim immunity from the responsibility of even minor errors of commission or omission with an excuse that you were engrossed in the major problems of the State which you have solved diligently.

Therefore, be very careful of the welfare of the poor people. Do not be arrogant and vain against them. Remember that you have to take particular care of those who cannot reach you, whose poverty-stricken and disease-ridden sight may be hateful to you, and whom

society treats with disgust, detestation and contempt. You should be a source of comfort, love and respect to them. Appoint a respectable, honest and pious person - a person who fears Allah and who can treat them honorably, order him to find out everything about them and to submit a report to you.

Then treat these poor people in such a way that on the Day of Judgment you can plead your case successfully before Allah because of all classes of your subjects this class deserves more of your attention, sympathy and fair-deal.

Though everyone of these poor persons deserves your sympathy and you will have to do justice to His cause to achieve His favor, yet you should pay more attention to young orphans and old cripples. They neither have any support nor can they conveniently come out begging. They cannot reach you; therefore, you must reach them.

Remember that the fulfillment of this obligation and duty is considered as a tiresome burden by most of the rulers but to those who desire to achieve His Blessings and to enter into His Realm, even this work seems light and congenial. They bear it happily, dutifully and sincerely. They find pleasures in it and they believe in the promise made by Allah.

Out of your hours of work, fix a time for the complainants and for those who want to approach you with their grievances. During this time you should do no other work but hear them and pay attention to their complaints and grievances. For this purpose you must arrange public audience for them during this audience, for the sake of Allah, treat them with kindness, courtesy and respect. Do not let your army and police be in the audience hall at such times so that those who have grievances against your regime may speak to you freely, unreservedly and without fear.

All this is a necessary factor of your rule because I have often heard the Holy Prophet (s) saying, "That nation or regime, where that rights of the depressed, destitute and suppressed are not guarded and where the mighty and powerful persons are not forced to accede these rights, cannot achieve salvation". You must

remember that in those audiences the most common men will gather. Therefore, if you find them misbehaving, becoming unmannerly or if you feel that their talk is irrelevant, tolerate them; do not be rude and do not insult them, so that Allah may be kind and merciful to you and may reward you for obeying His commands explicitly. Treat them courteously, hear their grievances patiently and if you are forced to reject their demands then reject them in such a way that your rejection may please them as much as your grants.

Then there are certain duties which only you will have to perform and which none of your officers can carry out. Among them are replies to the letters of your commissioners and governors and are beyond the jurisdiction or preview of your secretaries. If you find that your officers are not attending as much to the complaints of the public as they should, then you should personally attend to them. You must finish a day's work on that day only because each day will bring its own special work for you. Reserve your best time for prayers to Allah, though every work of the State is the work of Allah, especially, if you are sincere and honest, and if your subjects are happy with your rule and are safe from your oppression.

Among those duties that you are to perform diligently must be your daily prayers. These should be offered sincerely and persistently. You must fix times for this during days and nights. You must tax your bodily strength for this duty though it may tire you. Your observance of prayers should be sincere and faultless and should neither be so long as to tire out those who follow you in these prayers nor so short as to be faulty and defective because amongst those who follow you during the prayers, there may be some sick persons, while others may have to attend to some important work. When the Holy Prophet (s) sent me to Yemen I asked him how to lead the prayers. He advised me, "Offer prayers like a weak and old person and be kind to the faithful" (so that weak and old persons may follow your prayers easily and happily).

You must take care not to cut yourself off from the public. Do not place a curtain of false prestige between you and those over whom you rule. Such pretensions and show of pomp and pride are in reality manifestations of inferiority complex and vanity. The result

of such an attitude is that you remain ignorant of the conditions of your subjects and of the actual cases of the events occurring in the State.

You will fail to realize comparative importance of events taking place and may attach great significance to minor events and may slip over important facts, similarly you may attach importance to mediocre or insignificant people and may ignore real men of consequence; and what is more, you may lose the power of distinction between good and bad and may take one for the other or hopelessly mix up the two. After all a ruler is as much a human being as any other man and he may remain ignorant of facts of which his officers want to keep him in the dark (and on which the public may throw light). Thus truth may get mixed up with falsehood and may not be distinguished because there are no birthmarks on the forehead of truth that it may be easily differentiated from falsehood, one has to search for facts and sift realities from fictions, only then can one reach the truth. Think for yourself, there are only two categories of rulers and you may belong to one of them.

You may either be a pious, sincere and diligent ruler, doing the right thing at the right moment and following the principles of justice and equity and you may be protecting rights of others and doing your best to fulfill your obligations, in that case why hide from the public, why draw a curtain around yourself! Or you may be a miser refusing to be generous to anyone, in that case people will gradually come to know of this trait of your character and will gradually give up asking for favors from you but do not overlook the fact that most of their demands will have nothing to do with your private purse, they will be about the rights of people, obligations of the State, complaints against the State, oppressions, and solicitations of justice, then why try to avoid hearing these requests!

You should never overlook the fact that around the rulers there usually are certain privileged persons (relatives and friends). They may often try to take advantage of their status and may resort to selfishness, intrigues, fraud, corruption and oppression. If you find such people around you then do away with them (however closely

connected they may be with you), immediately bring an end to the scandal and clear your surroundings of all such moral and spiritual filth.

You must never give lands in permanent lease with all proprietary and ownership rights to your friends and relatives. You must never allow them to take possession of the source of water-supply or lands which have special utility for the communes. If they get possession of such holdings they will oppress others to derive undue benefits and thus gather all the fruits for themselves leaving for you a bad reputation in this world and punishment in the next.

Be fair in dispensing justice. Punish those who deserve punishment even though he may be your near relation or a close friend and even if such an action may give you pangs of sorrow and grief. Bear such a sorrow patiently and hope for Divine reward. I assure you this will bear good fruits.

If on account of your strict measures people get suspicious of your behaving like a tyrant and oppressor, then come out openly before them and explain to them the reasons of your actions and let them see the facts for themselves and realize the truth. This will give training to your mind, will be an act of kindness to the subjects and the confidence thus reposed in them will make them support justice and truth while you will achieve the end you have in view of obtaining their support in the cause of truth.

If your enemy invites you to a Peace Treaty that will be agreeable to Allah, then never refuse to accept such an offer because peace will bring rest and comfort to your armies, will relieve you of anxieties and worries, and will bring prosperity and affluence to your people. But even after such treaties be very careful of the enemies and do not place too much confidence in their promises because they often resort to Peace Treaty to deceive and delude you and take advantage of your negligence, carelessness and trust. At the same time be very careful, never break your promise with your enemy, never forsake the protection or support that you have offered to him, never go back upon your words, and never violate the terms of the treaty. You must even risk your life to fulfill the promises given and the terms settled because of all the obligations

laid by Almighty Allah upon man (in respect to other men) there is none so important as to keep one's promises when made.

Though people may differ in their religions and ideologies and may have divergent views upon various problems of State, yet they all agree that promises when made must be fulfilled. Even the heathens take care to keep the promises made among themselves because they have seen and realized the evil effects of breaking promises. Therefore, take very particular care of promises made, never go back upon the words given, never go into the offensive without previously challenging and giving an ultimatum. Deception and fraud even against your enemy is a deception against Allah and none but a wretched sinner would dare do that.

Allah has given promises and treaties the high rank of being messengers of peace and prosperity and through His Kindness and Mercy has made them a common desire (of keeping promises) in the minds of all men and a common requirement for all human beings. He has made them such a shelter and asylum that everybody desires to be under their protection.

Therefore, there should be no mental reservation, no fraud, no deception and no underlying meanings in between the lines when you make a promise or conclude a treaty. Do not use such words and phrases in your promises and treaties as have possibilities of being translated in more than one way or as may have various interpretations and many explanations, let there be no ambiguity in them, and let them be clear, precise and to the point. And when once a treaty has been finally concluded, do not try to take advantage of any ambiguous word or phrase in it. If you find yourself in a critical situation on account of the treaty made in the cause of Allah, then try to face the situation and bear the consequences bravely and do not try to back out of the terms that account, because to face such perplexing situations as may gain His Rewards and Blessings is better than to break your promises on that account and earn that about which you feel nervous and for which you will have to answer Allah and which may bring down His Wrath upon you in this world and damnation in the next.

Beware of the sin of shedding blood without religious justification and sanction because there is nothing quicker to bring down the Wrath of Allah, to take away His Blessings, to make you more deserving of His Wrath and to reduce the span of your life than to shed innocent blood. On the Day of Judgment Allah will first attend to sins of bloodshed carried out by man against man. Therefore, never try to strengthen your power, position and prestige by shedding innocent blood. Such murders instead of making your position strong will not only considerably weaken it but may also transfer your power totally, taking it away from you and entrusting it to somebody else.

If you have intentionally murdered a man then no excuse shall be acceptable to Allah or to me because punishment of such a crime is necessary.

And if you kill a man by mistake without any intention or motive of killing or while delivering legal penalties, your whip, sword or hand unintentionally and inadvertently deals a fatal blow because even a forcefully delivered slap or box on the ear may cause death, then do not, on account of your prestige and position, refuse paying the compensation to the heirs.

Beware and do not develop the trait of self-admiration and self-appreciation. Do not get conceited of the good points that you find in your good character or good deeds that you have done. Do not let flattery and cajolery make you vain and egoist. Remember that of all the cunning ruses of the devil to undo good deeds of the pious people and to affect their piety, flattery and false praises are the ones on which it relies the most.

Do not boast of the favors and kindnesses that you have done to your subjects and do not try to make them realise this, do not think too much of the good that you have done to them, and do not go back upon the promises made, all these three habits are very ugly features of one's character. The practice of boasting over the favors done undoes the good done, the habit of exaggerating and thinking very highly of our good actions will make us lose the guidance of Allah, and the habit of breaking one's promises is disliked both by Allah and by man. The Merciful Allah says, "It is most hateful in the

sight of Allah, to say something and not to practice it." [Qur'an, 61:3].

Do not be hasty and do not precipitate your decisions and actions, when the time comes for an action to be done, or a decision to be taken, then do not be lazy and do not waste time and do not show weakness. When you do not find a true way to do the thing on hand, then do not persist on the wrong way and when find a correct solution, then do not be lethargic in adopting it.

In short do everything at a proper time and in a proper way and keep everything in its proper place.

Do not reserve for yourself anything which is a common property of all and in which others have equal rights. Do not close your eyes from glaring malpractice of the officers, miscarriage of justice and misuse of rights because you will be held responsible for the wrong thus done to others. In the near future your wrong practices and maladministration will be exposed and you will be held responsible and punished for the wrong done to the helpless and oppressed people. Take care and keep control over you temper, your anger and your desire to be arrogant and vain. Take care of your hands when you are out to deliver punishment and of the sharpness of your tongue when you are saying harsh things. The best way to achieve this is not to be hasty in making remarks and to delay in delivering punishment so that you may keep your temper under control and are not overexcited.

And you cannot achieve this unless you constantly remember that you have to return to Allah and unless His fear overcomes every other sentiment.

You must always try to remember the good and useful things done in the past, activities of a just and benign regime, good deeds done by it, good laws promulgated, instructions of the Holy Prophet (s), commands of Allah given in His Holy Book and things that you have seen me doing or have heard me saying. Follow the good actions and advice found therein. Similarly, follow carefully the pieces of advice contained in these orders. Through them I have tried to teach you all that can be taught about a good regime. I have done

my duty towards you so that you may not go astray and your mind may not crave for base desires. If it does then you will have no excuse before Allah.

I beseech Allah that by His Limitless Mercy and by His Supreme Might He may grant our prayers, that He may lead both of us to the Divine Guidance of achieving His Pleasure, of successfully pleading our cases before Him, justifying our deeds before man, of gaining good repute, of leaving good results of our benign and just rule with ever expanding prosperity and ever increasing welfare of the State and of meeting our ends as martyrs and pious persons, as our return is towards Him only.

May the peace of Allah be upon the Holy Prophet (s) and His chosen descendants.

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Nahjul Balaghah: A Letter to His Son (Imam Hassan 'a.s.')

After returning from the Battle of Siffin, Imam Ali (a) gave certain pieces of advice to one of his sons. Some historians consider him to be Imam Hasan (a) while others are of the opinion that he was Muhammad Hanafiya. He wrote them in the form of a will. They deal with almost every aspect of life which goes a long way to make a man successful in life - brave, humane, generous, virtuous and pious.

These exhortations are from a father who realizes the morality of life, who is getting old, who has patiently borne reverses and calamities, who hates inordinate desires and has overcome them, and who is shortly going to pass out of this world, to his son who is young, who has the desire of leading the world to sober ways of thinking and better ways of life, a desire which is rather difficult to be achieved, a son, who is mortal and is bound by nature to follow the steps of all mortals, is subject to ailments, is surrounded by misfortunes and calamities, has to face oppressions and tyrannies, has often to confront with and sometimes to tolerate hypocrisy, deceit, guile, duplicity and treason and who is to end his life in death, is to bear sufferings, is the heir to a person who is dead and

gone and who finally ended his life as a martyr to the animosity of his enemies. (What a prophecy!)

Let it be known to you that decay of health, passing away of time and nearness of death, have made me realize that I should give more thought to my future (next world) and to my people; advise them more and spend more time in equipping them mentally to face this world. I felt that my own sons and my near ones have as much right to utilize my experiences and knowledge, all the ups and downs of life, all the realities and all the truths about life in this world and in the Hereafter, which are as much known to me as others. I decided, therefore, to spend more time over you and to prepare you more for your. This was neither selfishness nor self-esteem nor any mental luxury of giving away pieces of advice, but it was the sincere desire of making you see the world as I found it, look at the realities of lives as I looked at them, and do the right thing at the right time and right place as it should be done which made me write down these exhortations to you. You will not find in them anything but truth and realities.

My dear son! You are part of my body and soul and whenever I look at you I feel as if I am looking at myself. If any calamity befalls you, I feel as if it has befallen me. Your death will make me feel as if it was my own death. Your affairs are to me like my own affairs. Therefore, I committed these pieces of advice to paper. I want you to take care of them, to pay attention to them and to guard them well. I may remain longer in your life or I may not, but I want these pieces of advice to remain with you always.

My first and foremost advice to you, my son, is to fear Allah. Be His obedient servant. Keep His thought always fresh in your mind. Be attached to and carefully guard the principles (Islam) which connect you with Him. Can any other connection be stronger, more durable and more lasting than this to command greater respect and consideration or to replace it?

Accept good exhortations and refresh your mind with them. Adopt piety and kill your inordinate desires with its help. Build your character with the help of true faith in religion and Allah. Subjugate your nature with the vision of death, make it see the mortality of

life and of all that it holds dear, force it to realize the actuality of misfortunes and adversities, the changes of circumstances and times and compel it to study the lives of past people. Persuade it to see the ruined cities, the dilapidated palaces, decaying signs and relics of fallen empires of past nations. Then meditate over the activities of those people, what they have all done when they were alive and were in power, what they achieved, from where they started their careers; where, when and how they were brought to an end, where they are now; what have they actually gained out of life and what was their contributions to the human welfare.

If you carefully ponder over these problems, you will find that each one of those people has parted company with the others and with all that he cherished and loved and he is now in a solitary abode, alone and unattended; and you also will be like him.

Take care to provide well for your future abode. Do not barter away eternal blessing for pleasures of this mortal and fleeting world.

Do not talk about things which you do not know. Do not speculate about and pass verdicts on subjects about which you are not in a position to form an opinion and are not called upon to do so. Give up the way where there is a possibility of your going astray. When there is danger on your wandering in the wilderness of ignorance, possibility of losing the sight of the goal which you want to attain and of reaching the end aimed at, then it is better to give up the quest than to advance facing uncertain dangers and unforeseen risks.

Advise people to do good and to live virtuously because you are fit to give such advice. Let your words and deeds teach the world lessons of how to abstain from wickedness and vicious deeds. Try your best to keep away from those who indulge in vices and sins.

Fight, whenever required, to defend the cause of Allah. When you think of defending the cause of Allah do not be afraid that people will laugh at you, censure your action or slander you. Fearlessly and boldly help truth and justice. Bear patiently the sufferings and face bravely the obstacles which come in your way when you follow truth and when you try to uphold it. Adhere to the cause of truth

and justice wherever you find it. Try to be well versed with Islamic Jurisprudence and theology and acquire a thorough knowledge of the canons of this religion.

Develop the habit of patience against sufferings, calamities and adversities. This virtue of patience is one of the highest values of morality and nobility of character and it is the best habit which one can develop. Trust in Allah and let your mind seek His protection in every calamity and suffering because you will thus entrust yourself and your affairs to the Best Trustee and to the Mightiest Guardian. Do not seek help or protection from anybody but Allah. Reserve your prayers, your requests, your solicitations, your supplications, and your entreaties to Him and Him alone because to grant, to give, to confer and to bestow, as well as to withhold, to deprive, to refuse, and to debar, lies only in His Power. Ask as much of His Blessings and seek as much of His Guidance as you can.

Try to understand my exhortation, ponder over them deeply; do not take them lightly and do not turn away from them because the best knowledge is that which benefits the listener. The knowledge which does not benefit anybody is useless, not valuable and not worth learning and remembering.

My dear son! When I realized that I was getting old and when I felt that weakness and feebleness are gradually creeping into me then I hastened to advise you as to the best ways of leading a noble, virtuous and useful life. I hated the idea that death should overtake me before I tell you all that I wanted to tell or before my mental capacities like my bodily strength are weakened. I convey all this to you lest inordinate desires, temptations and inducement should start influencing you, or adverse changes of times and circumstances should drag your name in the mire or I should leave you like an untrained colt because a young and fresh mind is like a virgin soil which allows things sown in it to grow verdantly and to bear luxuriantly.

Then, I have made use of early opportunities to educate you and train you before your mind loses its freshness, before it gets hardened or warped, before you start facing life unprepared for the encounter, and before you are forced to use your decisions and

discretions without gaining advantages of cumulated traditions, collected knowledge and experiences of others. These words of advice and counsels that I give you, will save you from the worry of acquiring knowledge, gathering experiences and soliciting advice from others. Now you can easily make use of all the knowledge which men have to acquire with great care, trouble and patience. Things which were hidden from them and which only experiments, experiences and sufferings could bring to light are now made easily available to you through these exhortations.

My dear son! Though the span of my life is not as that of some other people who have passed away before me yet I took great care to study their lives, assiduously I went through their activities, I contemplated over their deliberations and deeds, I studied their remains, relics and ruins, I pondered over their lives so deeply that I felt as if I have lived and worked with them from early ages of history down to our times and I know what did them good and what brought harm to them.

Sifting the good from bad I am concentrating within these pages, and for your good, the knowledge that I so gathered. Through these pieces of advice I have tried to bring home to you the value of honest-living and high-thinking and the dangers of a vicious and sinful life, I have taken care to cover and guard every aspect of your life as it is the duty of a kind, considerate and loving father.

From the very beginning, I took care to help you to develop a noble character and to fit you for the life which you will have to lead, to let you grow up to be a young man with a noble character, an open and honest mind and clear and precise knowledge of things around you.

Originally my desire was only to teach you the Holy Book thoroughly, to make you understand its intricacies, to impart to you the complete knowledge of His commandments and interdictions and not to leave you at the mercy of the knowledge of other people.

But after having succeeded in this task I felt nervous that I may leave you untrained and uneducated in the subjects which

themselves are subject to so much confusion and so many contradictions. These are the subjects whose confusions have been made worse confounded by selfish desires, warped minds, wicked ways of life and sinful modes of thinking. Therefore, I have noted down, in these lines, the basic principles of nobility, piety, truth and justice.

You may feel them to be over-bearing and harsh but my desire is to equip you with this knowledge instead of leaving you unarmed to face the world where there is every danger of loss and damnation.

As you are a noble, virtuous and pious young man, I am sure you will receive Divine Guidance and Succor. I am sure He will help you to achieve your aim in life. I want you to promise to yourself to follow my advice carefully.

Remember my son! The best out of these pieces of advice of mine are the those which tell you to fear Allah, to concentrate and to confine yourself to the performance of those duties which have been made incumbent upon you by Him and to follow in the footsteps of your ancestors (The Holy Prophet (s) and Imam Ali (a)) and your pious and virtuous relationship.

Verily, they always carefully measured their thoughts and deeds, as you must also try to do and they carefully thought over the subject before saying anything about it or before doing a deed. You should also follow the same.

This kind of deliberation made them take from life what was really the best and forsake that which was not made incumbent upon them or which was not the best. If your mind refuses to accept my advice and you persist to try your own experiments like them then you are at liberty to arrive at your conclusions but only after thoroughly studying the subject and after acquiring the knowledge necessary for such decisions. You must not allow uncertainties and doubt poison your mind, skepticism or irrational likes and dislikes should not affect your views.

But remember that before you start thinking and deliberating over a problem seek guidance of the Lord and beseech Him to give you

a lead in the right direction. Avoid confusion in your ideas, and do not let disbelief take hold of your mind because the first will lead you to agnosticism and the others towards errors and sins. When you are thus prepared to solve any problem and you are sure that you possess a clear mind, a sincere and firm desire to reach the truth, to say the correct thing and to do the correct deed, then carefully go through the advice that I am leaving for you.

If your mind is not clear and it is not as free from doubts as you wish it to be, then you will be wandering in the wilderness of uncertainties and errors like a camel suffering from night-blindness. Under these circumstances it is best for you to give up the quest because with such limitations none can ever reach the truth.

My dear son! carefully and very carefully remember these sayings of mine. The Lord who is the Master of death is also the Master of life. The Creator is the Annihilator. And the One who annihilates has the power to bring everything back again to existence. The One who sends calamities has also the power to protect you from them.

Remember that this world is working under the laws ordained by Him, and it consists of assemblage and aggregation of actions and reactions, causes and effects, calamities and reverses, pains and pleasures and rewards and punishments, but this is not all which the picture depicts, there are things in it which are beyond our ken, things which we do not and cannot know and things which cannot be foreseen and foretold, for example the rewards and punishments on the Day of Judgment.

Under these circumstances, if you do not understand a thing, do not reject it. Remember that your lack of understanding is due to insufficiency of your knowledge. Remember that when you came into this world your first appearance was that of an ignorant, uneducated and unlearned being. Then you gradually acquired knowledge, but there were several things which were beyond your knowledge, which perplexed and surprised you, and about which you did not understand.

Gradually you acquired knowledge about some of those subjects and in future your knowledge and vision may further expand.

Therefore, the best thing for you to do is to seek guidance of One who has created you, Who maintains and nourishes you, Who has given you a balanced mind and a normally working body. Your invocations should be reserved for Him only, your requests and solicitations should be alone to Him and you should only be afraid of Him.

Be it known to you, my son, that nobody has given mankind such detailed information about Allah as our Holy Prophet (s). I advise you to have faith in his teachings, to make him your leader and to accept his guidance for your salvation. Thus advising you I have done the best that I can do as a sincere and loving adviser and I assure you that however you may try to find a better way for your good, you will not find any superior to the one advised by me.

Remember, my son, had there been any other god, besides the One, he would have also sent his messengers and prophets and they would have pointed out to mankind the domain and glory of this second god, and you would have also seen them. But no such incident ever took place. He is One Allah whom we should all recognize and worship. He has explained Himself. Nobody is a partner to Him in His Domain, Might and Glory.

He is Eternal, has always been and shall always be. He existed even before the Universe came into being but there is no beginning to His Existence. He shall remain when every other thing shall vanish, and there shall be no end to His Existence. His Glory and His Existence is so supreme, pre-eminent, transcendent, incomparable and excellent that it is beyond the grasp of intellects. No one can understand or visualize Him.

When you have accepted these facts then your behavior, so far as His commands are concerned, should be that of a person who realizes that his status, power and position is nothing when compared to that of His Lord; who wants to gain His Blessings through prayers and obedience, who fears His Wrath as well as His Punishments and who absolutely in need of His Help and Protection. Remember, my son, Allah has not ordered you to do anything but that which is good and which propagates goodness and He has not

prohibited you from anything but that which is bad and will bring about bad effects.

My dear son, through this message of mine, I have explained everything about this world, how fickle and fleeting is its attitude, how short-lived and evanescent is everything that it holds or offers about and how fast it changes its moods and favors. I have also explained about the life to come, the pleasures and blessings provided there, and the everlasting peace, comfort and happiness arranged for in Paradise.

I have given enough examples of both aspects of life, before and after death so that you may know the reality and lead your life on the basis of that knowledge.

As a matter of fact those people who have carefully studied the condition of life and the world, pass their days as if they know that they are travelers, who have to leave a place which is famine-stricken, unhealthy and uncongenial, and they have to proceed towards lands which are fertile, congenial, and where there is abundant provision of all comforts and pleasures.

They have eagerly taken up the journey, happy in the hope of future blessings and peace. They have willingly accepted the sufferings, troubles and hazards of the way, parting of friends, scarcity of food and comfort during the pilgrimage so that they may reach the journey's end - a happy place. They do not refuse to bear any discomfort and do not grudge any expenditure by way of giving out alms and charities, and helping the poor and the needy.

Every step which they put forward towards their goal, however tiring and exhausting it may be, is a happy event of their lives. On the contrary the condition of those people who are solely engrossed in this world and are sadly engulfed in its short-lived, quickly fading and vicious pleasures, is like that of travelers who are staying in fertile and happy regions and who have to undertake a journey, knowing fully well that the journey is going to end in a rough, arid and infertile land. Can anything be more loathsome and abhorring to them than this journey? How they would hate to leave the place

where they are and to arrive at a place which they so much hate and which is so dismaying, dreadful and horrifying!

My dear son, so far as your behavior with other human beings is concerned, let your 'self' act as scales to judge its goodness or wickedness. Do unto others as you wish others to do unto you.

Whatever you like for yourself, like for others, and whatever you dislike to happen to you, spare others from such happenings. Do not oppress and tyrannize anybody because you surely do not like to be oppressed and tyrannized. Be kind and sympathetic to others as you certainly desire others to treat you kindly and sympathetically. If you find objectionable and loathsome habits in others, abstain from developing those traits of character in yourself. If you are satisfied or feel happy in receiving a certain kind of behavior from others, you may behave with others in exactly the same way. Do not speak about them in the same way that you do not like others to speak about you.

Do not speak on a subject about which you know little or nothing, and if you at all want to speak on anything or about anyone of whom you are fully aware, then avoid scandal, libel and aspersion as you do not like yourself to be scandalized and scorned in the same manner.

Remember, son, that vanity and conceit are forms of folly. These traits will bring to you serious harm and will be a constant source of danger to you. Therefore, lead a well-balanced life (neither be conceited nor suffer from inferiority complex) and exert yourself to earn an honest living. But do not act like a treasure for somebody (do not be miserly so that you leave what you hoard for others). And whenever you receive guidance of the Lord to achieve a thing you desire, then do not get proud of your achievement but be humble and submissive to Him and realize that your success was due to His Mercy.

Remember my son, that before you is a long and arduous journey (life). The journey is not only very long, exhausting and onerous but the route is mostly through dismal, dreary and deserted regions where you will be sadly in need of refreshing, renovating

and enlivening aids and helps and you cannot dispense with such provisions as to keep you going and to maintain you till the end of the journey - the Day of Judgment.

But remember not to overload yourself (do not entrust yourself with so many obligations and duties that you cannot honorably fulfill them or with such luxurious life as to be wicked and vicious). Because if this load is more than what you can conveniently bear then your journey will be very painful and tiresome to you.

If you find around you such poor, needy and destitute people who are willing to carry your load for you as far as the Day of Judgment then consider this to be a boon, engage them and pass your burden on to them. (Distribute your wealth amongst the poor, destitute and the needy, help others to the best of your ability and be kind and sympathetic to human beings). Thus relieve yourself from the heavy responsibility and liability of submitting an account on the Day of Judgment of how you have made use of His Bounties (of health, wealth, power and position) and thus you may arrive at the end of the journey, light and fresh, have enough provision for you there (reward of having done your duty to man and Allah in this world).

Have as many weight-carriers as you can (help as many as you can) so that you may not miss them when you very badly need them (when your sins of commission and omission will be balanced against your good deeds you must have enough good deeds to turn the scale in your favor).

Remember that all you give out in charities and good deeds are like loans which will be paid back to you. Therefore, when you are wealthy and powerful, make use of your wealth and power in such a way that you get all that back on the Day of Judgment, when you will be poor and helpless. Be it known to you, my son, that your passage lies through an appallingly dreadful valley (death or grave) and extremely trying and arduous journey.

Here a man with light weight is far better than an over-burdened person and one who can travel fast will pass through it quickly than

the one whose encumbering forces go slowly. You shall have to pass through this valley.

The only way out of it is either in Paradise or in Hell. Therefore, it is wise to send your things there beforehand so that they (good deeds) reach there before you, prearrange for the place of your stay before you reach there because after death there is no repentance and no possibility of coming back to this world to undo the wrong done by you.

Realize this truth, my son, that the Lord who owns and holds the treasures of Paradise and the earth has given you permission to ask and beg for them and He has promised to grant your prayers. He has told you to pray for His Favors that they may be granted to you and to ask for His Blessings that they may be bestowed upon you. He has not appointed guards to prevent your prayers reaching Him. Nor is there any need for anybody to intercede before Him on your behalf.

If you go back upon your promises, if your break your vows, or start doing things that you have repented of, He will not immediately punish you nor does He refuse His Blessings in haste and if you repent once again He neither taunts you nor betrays you though you may fully deserve both, but He accepts your penitence and pardons you. He never grudges His Forgiveness nor refuses His Mercy, on the contrary He has decreed repentance as a virtue and pious deed.

The Merciful Lord has ordered that every evil deed of yours will be counted as one and a good deed and pious action will be rewarded tenfold. He has left the door of repentance open. He hears you whenever you call Him. He accepts your prayer whenever you pray to Him. Invoke Him to grant you your heart's desire, lay before Him the secrets of your heart, tell Him about all the calamities that have befallen you and misfortunes which face you, and beseech His help to overcome them. You may invoke His Help and Support in difficulties and distresses.

You may implore Him to grant you long life and sound health, you may pray to Him for prosperity and you may request Him for such favors and grants that none but He can bestow and award.

Think over it that by simply granting you the privilege of praying for His Favors and Mercies, He has handed over the keys of His treasures to you. Whenever you are in need you should pray and He will confer His Bounties and Blessings.

But sometimes you will find that your requests are not immediately granted, then you need not be disappointed because the grant of prayers often rests with the true purpose and intention of the implorer. Sometimes the prayers are delayed because the Merciful Lord wants you to receive further rewards for patiently bearing calamities and sufferings and still believing sincerely in His Help. Thus you may be awarded better favors than you requested for.

Sometimes your prayers are turned down, and this is also in your interest; because you often, unknowingly, ask for things that are really harmful to you. If your requests are granted they will do you more harm than good and many of your requests may be such that if they are granted they will result in your eternal damnation.

Thus the refusal to accede to your solicitations is a blessing in disguise to you. But very often your requests, if they are not really harmful to you in this life or in the Hereafter, may be delayed but they are granted in quantities much more than you had asked for, bringing in more blessings in their wake than you could ever imagine.

So you should be very careful in asking Allah for His Favor. Only pray for such things as are really beneficial to you, and are lasting and in the long run do not end in harm. Remember, my dear son, that wealth and power (if you pray for them) are such things that they will not always be with you and may bring harm to you in the life in the Hereafter.

Be it known to you, my son, that you are created for the next world and not for this. You are born to die and not to live forever. Your stay in this world is transient. You live in a place which is subject to

decay and destruction. It is a place where you will have to be busy getting ready for the next world. It is a road (to the next world) on which you are standing. Death is following you. You cannot run away from it. However hard you may try to avoid it, it is going to catch you sooner or later.

Therefore take care that it may not catch you unawares or when you are not prepared for it, and no chance is left to you to repent the vices and sins committed and to undo the harm done by you. If death catches you unawares, then you are eternally damned. Therefore, my dear son, always keep three things in mind: death, your deeds and the life in the Hereafter. In this way you will always be ready to face death and it will not catch you unawares.

My dear son, do not be carried away and be allured by the infatuations of the worldly people in the vicious life and its pleasures, and do not be impressed by the sight of their acute struggle to possess and own this world.

Allah has very mercifully explained to you everything about this world. Not only the Merciful Lord but also the world has also told you everything; it has disclosed to you that it is mortal; it has openly declared its weakness, its shortcomings and its vices.

Remember that these worldly-minded people are like barking dogs and hungry and ferocious beasts. Some of them are constantly barking at others. The mighty lords kill and massacre the poor and the weak.

Their powerful persons exploit and tyrannize the powerless. Their inordinate desires and their greed has such a complete hold over them that you will find some of them like animals tamed and tied with a rope round their feet and necks. (They have lost the freedom of thought and cannot come out of the enslavement of their desires and habits).

While they are others whom wealth and power have turned mad. They behave like unruly beasts, trampling, crushing and killing their fellow beings, and destroying things around them. The history of this world is merely a reward of such incidents, some big and

some small, the difference is of might but the intensity is the same. These people have lost the balance of their minds. They do not know what they are doing and where they are going, scan their activities and study their ways of thinking and you will find them confused and irrational, they appear like cattle wandering in a dreary desert where there is no water to drink and no fodder to eat, no shepherd to cater for them and no guardian to look after them. What has actually happened to them is that the vicious world has taken possession of them, it is dragging them wherever it likes, and is treating them as if they are blind because it has in reality blind-folded them against Divine light of true religion.

They are wandering without reasonable aims and sober purposes in the bewitching show that the world has staged for them, they are fully intoxicated with the pleasures amassed around them. They take this world to be their god and nourisher. The world is amusing them and they are amused with it and have forgotten and forsaken everything else.

But the nights of enjoyments and pleasures will not last long for anybody, the dawn of realities will break sooner or later. The caravan of life will surely reach its destination one day. One who has nights and days acting as piebald horses for him, carrying him onward and onward towards his journey's end must remember that though he may feel as if he is stopping at one place yet actually he is moving on, he is proceeding to his destination. Everyday is carrying him a step further in his journey towards death.

Be it known to you, my son, that you cannot have every wish of yours granted, you cannot expect to escape death, and you are passing through your days of life as others before you have passed. Therefore, control your expectations, desires and cravings. Be moderate in your demands.

Earn your livelihood through scrupulously honest means. Be contented with what you get honestly and honorably. Have patience and do not let your desires drive you madly because there are many desires which will lead you towards disappointments and loss. Remember that every beggar or everyone who prays for a thing will not always get what he begs or prays for and everyone

who controls his desire, has self-respect and does not beg or pray for things, will not always remain unlucky or disappointed. So, do not bring down your self-respect, do not be mean and submissive and do not subjugate yourself through these vile and base traits though they may appear to make it possible for you to secure your hearts desires because nothing in this world can compensate for the loss of self-respect, nobility and honor.

Take care, my son! Be warned that you do not make yourself a slave of anybody. Allah has created you a freeman. Do not sell away your freedom in return of anything. There is no actual gain and real value in benefits that you derive by selling your honor and self-respect or by subjugating yourself to disgrace and insults as there is no real good in wealth and power that you acquire by foul means.

Beware, my son, that avarice and greed may not drive you towards destruction and damnation. If you can succeed in having nobody as your benefactor but Allah, then try your best to achieve this nobility because He will grant you your share whether you try to taunt your donors, patrons and benefactors or not.

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Wise Maxims of Imam Ali (a.s.)

- Remember that the little which is given to you by Allah is going to be more useful and serviceable to you and is more honorable and respectable than what is granted by man in abundance. And what can a man give you but part of that which Allah has granted him?
- The losses that you suffer on account of your silence can be easily compensated but the losses which arise out of excessive and loose talk are difficult to requite. Do you not see that the best way of guarding water in a water-bay is to close its mouth.
- To guard what you already possess is better than to beg from others.
- The bitterness of disappointment and poverty is in reality sweeter than the disgrace of begging.

- Returns of hard but respectable labor of a craft or profession, though small in quantity, are better than the wealth which you amass through sin and wickedness.
- Nobody can guard your secrets better than you.
- Often a man tries his best to acquire a thing which is most harmful to him.
- One who talks too much makes most mistakes.
- One who often reflects, develops his foresight.
- By keeping company with good people, you will develop your character and by avoiding the society of wicked persons, you will abstain from wickedness.
- Livelihood acquired by foul means is the worst form of livelihood.
- To oppress a weak and helpless person is the worst form of ferocity.
- If your kindness or indulgence is going to bring forth cruel results, then severity of strictness is the real kindness.
- Often medicating results in disease; sometimes diseases prove to be health preservers.
- Often you obtain warnings and advice from people who are not fit to warn and advise you and often you come across advisers who are not sincere.
- Do not rely on vain hopes because vain hopes are assets of fools and idiots.
- Wisdom is the name of the trait of remembering experiences and making use of them. The best experience is the one which gives the best warning and advice.
- Take advantage of opportunities before they turn their backs on you.
- Everyone who tries cannot succeed.
- Everyone who departs this life will not return.
- The worst form of follies is to waste opportunities of this life as well as to lose salvation.
- For every action there is a reaction.
- Shortly you will get what has been destined for you.
- There is an element of risk and speculation in every trade as well as danger of loss.
- Often small returns prove as beneficial as big profits.

- An accessory of an accomplice who insults you and a friend who has not formed a good opinion of you will not be of any help or use to you.
- Treat those with consideration and kindness over whom you have power and authority.
- Do not run the risk of endangering yourself through irrational, unreasonable and extravagant hopes.
- Take care so as not to be fooled by flattery.
- Do good to your brother when he is bent upon doing harm to you. When he ignores or declines to recognize the kinship, befriend him, go to his help and try to maintain relations. If he is miserly with you and refuses to help you, be generous with him and support him financially. If he is cruel with you, be kind and considerate with him. If he harms you accept his excuses. Behave with him as if he is a master and you are a slave, and he is a benefactor and you are a beneficiary. But be careful that you do not thus behave with undeserving and mean persons.
- Do not develop friendship with the enemy of your friend otherwise your friend will turn into an enemy.
- Advise your friend sincerely and to the best of your ability even though he may not like it.
- Keep a complete control over your temper and anger because I never found anything more beneficial at the end and producing more good results than such a control.
- Be mild, pleasant and lenient with him who is harsh, gross, and strict with you; gradually he will turn to your behavior.
- Grant favor and be considerate to your enemy because you will thus gain either one of the two kinds of victories: (one rising above your enemy, the other of reducing the intensity of his hostility).
- If you want to cease relations with your friend, then do not break off totally, let your heart retain some consideration for him so that you will still have some regard for him if he comes back to you.
- Do not disappoint a person who holds a good opinion of you and do not make him change his opinion.
- Under the impression that you, as a friend, can behave as you like, do not violate the rights of your friend because, when he is deprived of his rights and privileges, he will no more remain your friend.

- Do not ill-treat members of your family and do not behave with them as if you are the most cruel man alive.
- Do not run after him who tries to avoid you.
- The greatest achievement of your character is that the hostility of your brother against you does not overcome the consideration and friendship you feel towards him, and his ill-treatment of you does not overbalance your kind treatment to him.
- Do not get worried and depressed over the oppressions because whoever oppresses you is in reality doing himself harm and is trying to find ways for your good.
- Never ill-treat a person who has done good to you.
- Know it well, son, that there are two kinds of livelihood: one which you are searching for and the other which follows you (which has been destined for you). It will reach you even if you do not try to obtain it.
- To be submissive, humble, crawling and begging when one is needy, powerless and poor and to be arrogant, oppressing and cruel when in power and opulence are two very ugly traits of the human character.
- Nothing in this world is really useful to you unless it has some utility and value for you for the next world. If you at all want to lament over things which you have lost in this world then worry about the loss of things which had immortal values for you.
- The past and almost all that was in your possession during the past is not with you know. You may thus rationally come to the conclusion that the present and all that is in your possession now will also leave you.
- Do not be like persons on whom advice has no effect; they require punishment to improve them. A sensible man acquires education and culture through advice, while brutes and beasts always improve through punishment.
- Overcome your sorrows, your worries and your misfortunes with patience and faith in the Merciful Lord and your hard work; one who gives up a straight path, honest and rational ways of thinking and working, will harm himself.
- A friend is like a relation and a true friend is one who speaks well of you even behind your back.
- Inordinate desires are related with misfortunes.

- Often close relations behave more distantly than strangers and often strangers help you more than your nearest relatives.
- Poor is he who has no friends.
- Whoever forsakes truth finds that his path of life has become narrow and troublesome.
- Contentment and honesty are the lasting assets to retain ones prestige and position.
- The strongest relation is the one which is between man and Allah.
- One who does not care for you is your enemy.
- If there is a danger of death or destruction in securing an object then safety lies in avoiding it.
- Weaknesses and shortcomings are not the things to talk about.
- Opportunities do not repeat themselves.
- Sometimes very wise and learned persons fail to achieve the object they were aiming at and foolish and uneducated people attain their purposes.
- Postpone evil deeds as long as possible because you can commit them whenever you so desire (then why hurry in committing them).
- To cut connections with ignorant people is itself like forming connections with wise persons.
- Whoever trusts this world is betrayed by it and whoever gives it importance is disgraced by it.
- Every arrow of yours will not hit the bull's eye.
- When status changes your conditions also change.
- Before ascertaining the conditions of a route, find out what kinds of persons will accompany you on the journey.
- Instead of enquiring about the condition of the home in which you are going to stay, first of all try to find out what kind of people your neighbors are.
- Do not introduce ridiculous topics in your talk even if you have to repeat sayings of others.
- Do not seek the advice of women, their verdicts are often immature and incorrect and their determinations are not firm. You must guard and defend them and act as a shelter to protect them from impious and injurious surroundings and infamous sights, this kind of shelter will keep them well-protected from every harm. Their contact with a vicious and sinful atmosphere (even with all the shelter that you can provide) is going to

prove more harmful than being left with protection. Do not let them interfere with affairs where you cannot personally guide or protect them. Do not let them aspire for things which are beyond their capacities. They are more like decoration to humanity and are not made to rule and govern humanity. Exhibit reasonable interest in things which they desire and give importance to them, but do not let them influence your opinions and do not let them impel you to go against your sane views.

- Do not force them into marriages which they abhor or which they consider below their dignity because there is danger of thus converting honorable and virtuous women into shameless and dishonorable beings.
- Divide and distribute work among your servants so that you can hold each one responsible for the work entrusted to them. This is a better and smoother way of carrying on a work than each one of them throwing the responsibility of every bit of work on somebody else.
- Treat the members of your family with love and respect because they act as wings with which you fly and as hands which support you and fight for you. They are people towards whom you turn when you are in trouble and in need.
- My dear son! After having given these pieces of advice to you I entrust you to the Lord. He will help, guide and protect you in this world and the Hereafter. I beseech Him to take you under His protection in both the worlds.

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Selected Hadith from Nahjul Balaghah

30. When Imam Ali was asked about Faith in Religion, he replied that the structure of faith is supported by four pillars endurance, conviction, justice and jihad.

Endurance is composed of four attributes: eagerness, fear, piety and anticipation (of death). so whoever is eager for Paradise will ignore temptations; whoever fears the fire of Hell will abstain from sins; whoever practices piety will easily bear the difficulties of life and whoever anticipates death will hasten towards good deeds.

Conviction has also four aspects to guard oneself against infatuations of sin; to search for explanation of truth through knowledge; to gain lessons from instructive things and to follow the precedent of the past people, because whoever wants to guard himself against vices and sins will have to search for the true causes of infatuation and the true ways of combating them out and to find those true ways one has to search them with the help of knowledge, whoever gets fully acquainted with various branches of knowledge will take lessons from life and whoever tries to take lessons from life is actually engaged in the study of the causes of rise and fall of previous civilizations .

Justice also has four aspects depth of understanding, profoundness of knowledge, fairness of judgment and dearness of mind; because whoever tries his best to under- stand a problem will have to study it, whoever has the practice of studying the subject he is to deal with, will develop a clear mind and will always come to correct decisions, whoever tries to achieve all this will have to develop ample patience and forbearance and whoever does this has done justice to the cause of religion and has led a life of good repute and fame.

Jihad is divided into four branches: to persuade people to be obedient to Allah; to prohibit them from sin and vice; to struggle (in the cause of Allah) sincerely and firmly on all occasions and to detest the vicious. Whoever persuades people to obey the orders of Allah provides strength to the believers; whoever dissuades them from vices and sins humiliates the unbelievers; whoever struggles on all occasions discharges all his obligations and whoever detests the vicious only for the sake of Allah, then Allah will take revenge on his enemies and will be pleased with Him on the Day of Judgment.

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31. There are four causes of infidelity and loss of belief in Allah: hankering after whims, a passion to dispute every argument, deviation from truth; and dissension, because whoever hankers after whims does not incline towards truth; whoever keeps on disputing every argument on account of his ignorance, will always

remain blind to truth, whoever deviates from truth because of ignorance, will always take good for evil and evil for good and he will always remain intoxicated with misguidance. And whoever makes a breach (with Allah and His Messenger) his path becomes difficult, his affairs will become complicated and his way to salvation will be uncertain.

Similarly, doubt has also four aspects absurd reason- ing; fear; vacillation and hesitation; and unreasonable surrender to infidelity, because one who has accustomed himself to unreasonable and absurd discussions will never see the Light of Truth and will always live in the darkness of ignorance. One who is afraid to face facts (of life, death and the life after death) will always turn away from ultimate reality, one who allows doubts and uncertainties to vacillate him will always be under the control of Satan and one who surrenders himself to infidelity accepts damnation in both the worlds.

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38. Imam Ali once said to his son Imam Hasan, My son, learn four things from me and through them you will learn four more. If you keep them in mind your actions will not bring any harm to you: The greatest wealth is Wisdom; the greatest poverty is stupidity; the worst unso-ciableness is that of vanity and self-glorification; and the best nobility of descent exhibits itself in politeness and in refinement of manner. The next four things, my son, are: "Do not make friendship with a fool because when he will try to do you good he will do you harm; do not make a miser your friend because he will run away from you at the time of your dire need; do not be friendly with a vicious and wicked person because he will sell you and your friendship at the cheapest price and do not make friend of a liar because like a mirage he will make you visualize very near the things which lie at a great distance and will make you see at the great distance the things which are near to you".

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112. No wealth is more useful than intelligence and wisdom; no solitude is more horrible than when people avoid you on account of

your vanity and conceit or when you wrongly consider yourself above everybody to confide and consult; no eminence is more exalting than piety; no companion can prove more useful than politeness; no heritage is better than culture; no leader is superior to Divine Guidance; no deal is more profitable than good deeds; no profit is greater than Divine Reward; no abstinence is better than to restrain one's mind from doubts (about religion); no virtue is better than refraining from prohibited deeds; no knowledge is superior to deep thinking and prudence; no worship or prayers are more sacred than fulfillment of obligations and duties, no religious faith is loftier than feeling ashamed of doing wrong and bearing calamities patiently; no eminence is greater than to adopt humbleness; no exaltation is superior to knowledge; nothing is more respectable than forgiveness and forbearance; no support and defense are stronger than consultation.

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130. Imam Ali heard someone abusing and blaming the world and said to him, "O you, who are blaming the world, who have been allured and enticed by it, and have been tempted by its false pretenses. You allowed yourself to be enamored of, to be captivated by it and then you accuse and blame it. Have you any reason or right to accuse it and to call it a sinner and seducer? Or is the world not justified in calling you a wicked knave and a sinning hypocrite? When did it make you lose your intelligence and reasoning? And how did it cheat you or snake false pretenses to you? Did it conceal from you the fact of the ultimate end of everything that it holds, the fact of the sway of death, decay and destruction in its domain? Did it keep you in the dark about the fate of your fore- fathers and their final abode under the earth? Did it keep the resting-place of your mothers a secret from you? Do you not know that they have returned to dust?

Many a time you must have attended the sick persons and many of them you must have seen beyond the scope of medicine. Neither the science of healing nor could your nursing and attendance nor your prayers and weeping prolonged the span of their lives, and they died. You were anxious for them, you procured the best medical aid, you gathered famous physicians and provided best -

medicines for them. Death could not be held back and life could not be pro- longed. In this drama and in this tragedy did the world not present you with a lesson and a moral?

Certainly, this world is a house of truth for those who look into it carefully, an abode of peace and rest for those who understand its ways and moods and it is the best working ground for those who want to procure rewards for life in the Hereafter. It is a place of acquiring knowledge and wisdom for those who want to acquire them, a place of worship for the friends of Allah and for Angels. It is the place where prophets received revelations of Allah. It is the place for virtuous people and saints to do good deeds and to be assigned with rewards for the same.

Only in this world they could trade with Allah's Favors and Blessings and only while living here they could barter their good deeds with His Blessings and Rewards. Where else could all this be done? Who are you to abuse the world when it has openly declared its mortality and mortality of everything connected with it, when it has given everyone of its inhabitants to understand that all of them are to face death, when through its ways it has given them all an idea of calamities they have to face here, and through the sight of its temporary and fading pleasures it has given them glimpses of eternal pleasures of Paradise and suggested them to wish and work for the same.

If you study it properly you will find that simply to warn and frighten you of the consequences of evil deeds and to persuade you towards good actions, every night it raises new hopes of peace and prosperity in you and every morning it places new anxieties and new worries before you. Those who passed such lives are ashamed of and repent the time so passed abuse this world. But there are people who will praise this world on the Day of Judgment that it reminded them of the Hereafter and they took advantage of these reminders. It informed them of the effects of good deeds and they made correct use of the information it advised them and they were benefited by its advice".

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146. Kumayl bin Ziyad Nakha'i says that once Imam Ali put his hand in his hand and took me to the grave-yard. When he passed through it and left the city behind, he heaved a sigh and said "Kumayl, these hearts are containers of the secrets of knowledge and wisdom and the best container is the one which can hold the most and what it holds, it can preserve and protect in the best way. Therefore, remember carefully what I am telling you.

Remember that there are three kinds of people: one kind is of those learned people who are highly versed in the ethics of truth and philosophy of religion, second is the kind of those who are acquiring the above knowledge and the third is that class of people who are uneducated. They follow every pretender and accept every slogan, they have neither acquired any knowledge nor have they secured any support of firm and rational convictions.

Remember, Kumayl, knowledge is better than wealth because it protects you while you have to guard wealth. It decreases if you keep on spending it but the more you make use of knowledge the more it increases. What you get through wealth dis- appears as soon as wealth disappears but what you achieve through knowledge will remain even after you.

O Kumayl ! Knowledge is power and it can command obedience. A man of knowledge during his lifetime can make people obey and follow him and he is praised and venerated after his death. Remember that knowledge is a ruler and wealth is its subject.

O Kumayl ! Those who amass wealth, though alive, are dead to realities of life, and those who achieve know- ledge, will remain alive through their knowledge and wisdom even after their death, though their faces may disappear from the community of living beings, yet their ideas, the knowledge which they had left behind and their memory, will remain in the minds of people".

Kumayl says that after this brief dissertation, Imam Ali pointed towards his chest and said, "Look Kumayl! Here I hold stores and treasures of knowledge. I wish I could find somebody to share it with me.

Yes, I found a few, but one of them, though quite intelligent, was untrustworthy, he would sell his salvation to get hold of the world

and its pleasures, he would make religion a pretence to grasp worldly power and wealth, he would make this Blessing of Allah (knowledge) serve him to get supremacy and control over friends of Allah and he would through knowledge exploit and suppress other human beings.

The other person was such that he apparently obeyed truth and knowledge, yet his mind had not achieved the true light of religion, at the slightest ambiguity or doubt he would get suspicious of truth, mistrust religion and would rush towards skepticism. So neither of them was capable of acquiring the superior knowledge that I can impart.

Besides these two I find some other person One of them is a slave of self and greedy for inordinate desires, which can easily drag him away from the path of religion, the other is an avaricious, grasping and acquisitive miser who will risk his life to grasp and hold wealth, none of these two will be of any use to religion or man, both of them resemble beasts having appetite for food. If sensible trustees of knowledge and wisdom totally disappear from human society then both knowledge and wisdom will suffer severely, may bring harm to humanity and may even die out.

But this earth will never be without those persons who will prove the universality of truth as disclosed by Allah, they may be well-known persons, openly and fearlessly declaring the things revealed to them or they may, under fear of harm, injury or deaths hide themselves from the public gaze and may carry on their mission privately so that the reasons proving the reality of truth as preached by religion and as demonstrated by His Prophet may not totally disappear.

How many are they and where could they be found? I swear by Allah that they are very few in number but their worth and their ranks before Allah are very high. Through them Allah preserves His Guidance so that they, while departing, may hand over these truths to persons like themselves.

The knowledge which they have acquired has made them see the realities and visualize the truth and has instilled into them the spirit of faith and trust. The duties which were decreed as hard and

unbearable by them. They feel happy in the company and association of things which frighten the ignorant and uneducated. They live in this world like everybody else but their souls soar to the heights of Divine Eminence. They are media of Allah on this earth and they invite people towards Him. How I love to meet them O Kumayl ! I have told you all that I have to say, you can go back to your place whenever you like".

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149. Somebody requested Imam Ali to advise him how to lead a useful and sober life. Imam Ali thereupon advised him thus: "Do not be among those people who want to gain good returns without working hard for them, who have long hopes and keep on postponing repentance and penance, who talk like pious persons but run after vicious pleasures.

Do not be among those who are not satisfied if they get more in life and are not content if their lot in life's pleasures is less (they are never satisfied), who never thank Allah for what they get and keep on constantly demanding increase in what is left with them; who advise others to such good deeds that they themselves refrain from; who appreciate good people but do not follow their ways of life; who hate bad and vicious people but follow their ways of life; who, on account of their excessive sins hate death but do not give up the sinful ways of life; who, if fallen ill, repent their ways of life and on regaining their health fearlessly readopt the same frivolous ways; who get despondent and lose all hopes, but on gaining health, become arrogant and careless; who, if faced with misfortunes, dangers or afflictions, turn to Allah and keep on beseeching Him for relief and when relieved or favored with comfort and ease they are deceived by the comfortable conditions they found themselves in and forget Allah and forsake prayers; whose minds are allured by day dreams and forlorn hopes and who abhor to face realities of life; who fear for others the enormous repercussions of vices and sins but for their own deeds expect very high rewards or very light disciplinary actions. Riches make such people arrogant, rebellious and wicked, and poverty makes them despondent and lethargic. If they have to work, they work lazily and if they put up a demand they do it stubbornly.

Under the influence of inordinate cravings, they commit sins in quick succession and keep on postponing repentance. Calamities and adversities make them give up the distinguished characteristics of Muslims (patience, hope in future and work for improvement of circumstances).

They advise people with narration's of events and facts but do not take any lesson from them. They are good at preaching but bad at practice, therefore they always talk of lofty deeds but their actions belie their words. They are keen to acquire temporal pleasures but are careless and slow to achieve permanent (Divine) benefits.

They think good for themselves the things which are actually injurious to them and regard harmful the things which really benefit them. They are afraid of death but waste their time and do not resort to good deeds before death overtakes them.

The vices which they regard as enormous sins for others, they consider as minor shortcomings for themselves. Similarly, they attach great importance to their obedience to the orders of Allah and belittle similar actions in others.

Therefore, they often criticize others and speak very highly of their own deeds. They are happy to spend their time in society of rich persons, wasting it in luxuries and vices but are averse to employing for useful purposes in company of the poor and pious people:

They are quick and free to pass verdicts against others but they never pass a verdict against their own vicious deeds.

They force others to obey them but they never obey Allah.

They collect their dues carefully but never pay the dues they owe. They are not afraid of Allah but fear powerful men".

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CHAPTER FOUR

Imam al-Sajjad

Imam al-Sajjad (a.s.)

(654 AD – 712 AD)

Imam Alī ibn Husayn is a great-grandson of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as well as the fourth Shī'ah Imām. 'Alī ibn Husayn was born on 5 Shabaan 33 AH (654 AD) in Medina. His mother was Shahrbānū the daughter of Yazdjurd II, the last of the Persian Kings before Islam. His father was Husayn ibn 'Alī, grandson of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). He is known as Zayn al-Abidīn "Beauty/Best of the Worshippers". He is also referred to as Imām al-Sajjad "the Prostrating Imām" and Sayyid as-Sājjadīna wa r-Rāki'īn "Leader of Those who Prostrate and Bow".

'Alī ibn Husayn, like his grandfather, cultivated land and palm date orchards in the city of Madineh. All the human qualities and attributes were collectively present in his personality. He was the complete specimen of tolerance, forgiveness and self-sacrifice.

'Alī ibn Husayn resided in Medina until his death. He dedicated his life to teaching and spreading Islam and became an authority on prophetic traditions and Sharia. He is regarded as the source of the third holiest book in Shī'ah Islam after the Qur'ān and the Nahj al Balagha. The invaluable collection of his edited prayers are known as as-Sahifah al-Kdmilah or as-Sahifah as-Sajjddiyyah; it is known also as az-Zabur (Psalm) of Al Muhammad

The collection is an invaluable treasury of wonderfully effective supplications to the Lord in inimitably beautiful language.

Only those who have ever come across those supplications would know the excellence and the beneficial effect of these prayers. Through these prayers the Imam gave all the necessary guidance to the faithful during his seclusion. Imam (a.s.) in Madina through his silent teachings left many pupils. The period of his Imaamat is 33 years.

On the 25th of Muharram 95 AH when he was in Medina, al-Walid ibn Abdi l-Malik ibn Marwan, the then ruler got this Holy Imam martyred by poison. The funeral prayers for this Holy Imam were conducted by his son the Fifth Imam, Muhammad al-Baqir and his body was laid to rest in the cemetery of Jannatu l-Baqi in Medina.

In what follows, some selected sermons and supplications are given of the Imam al-Sajjad's teaching with regard to the area of moral conducts and ethical values.

TREATISE ON RIGHTS (RISALAT AL-HUQUQ)

INTRODUCTION

KNOW - God have mercy upon you - that God has rights against you and that these encompass you in every movement through which you move, every rest through which you rest, every waystation in which you reside, every limb which you employ, and every instrument which you put to work. Some of these rights are greater and some less.

God's rights: The greatest of God's rights against you is the right which He has made incumbent upon you for Himself and which is the root of all rights, then those which He has made incumbent upon you in yourself, from your crown to your foot, in keeping with the diversity of your organs. He has given your tongue a right against you, your hearing a right against you, your sight a right against you, your hand a right against you, your leg a right against you, your stomach a right against you, and your private part a right against you. These are the seven organs through which acts (*af'al*) take place.

Then He gave your acts rights against you: He gave your ritual prayer a right against you, your fasting a right against you, your charity a right against you, your offering a right against you, and your acts a right against you.

Then these rights extend out from you to others who have rights against you. The most incumbent of them against you are the rights toward your leaders (*a'imma*), then the rights toward your subjects (*ra'iyya*), then the rights toward your womb [relatives] (*rahim*).

From these rights branch out other rights. The rights of your leaders are three: The most incumbent upon you is the right of him who trains you through authority, then of him who trains you through knowledge, then of him who trains you through property.

Rights of your subjects: The rights of your subjects are three: The most incumbent upon you is the right of those who are your subjects through authority, then the right of those who are your subjects through knowledge for the man of ignorance is the subject of the man of knowledge then the right of those who are your subjects through property, such as wives and what is owned by the right hand.

Rights of your relatives: The rights of your womb relatives are many; they are connected to you in the measure of the connection of the womb relationship. The most incumbent upon you is the right of your mother, then the right of your father, then the right of your child, then the right of your brother, then the next nearest, then the next nearest - the most worthy, then the next most worthy.

Right of your master: Then there is the right of your master who favors you [by freeing you from slavery], then the right of the slave whose favors reach you [by the fact that you free him], then the right of him who does a kindly act toward you, then the right of the muezzin who calls you to the ritual prayer, then the right of the imam who leads the prayer, then the right of your sitting companion, then the right of your neighbor, then the right of your companion, then the right of your partner, then the right of your property, then the right of him who has a debt he must pay back to you, then the right of him to whom you owe a debt, then the right of your associate, then the right of your adversary who has a claim against you, then the right of your adversary against whom you have a claim, then the right of him who asks you for advice, then

the right of him whom you ask for advice, then the right of him who asks your counsel, then the right of him who counsels you, then the right of him who is older than you, then the right of him who is younger than you, then the right of him who asks from you, then the right of him from whom you ask, then the right of him who does something evil to you through word or deed, or him who makes you happy through word or deed, intentionally or unintentionally, then the right of the people of your creed, then the right of the people under your protection, then all rights in the measure of the causes of the states and the occurrence of events.

Therefore happy is he whom God aids in the rights which He has made incumbent upon him and whom He gives success therein and points in the proper direction!

[A. RIGHTS OF GOD AGAINST ONESELF]

[1] The greatest right of God against you is that you worship Him without associating anything with Him. When you do that with sincerity (*ikhlas*), He has made it binding upon Himself to give you sufficiency in the affair of this world and the next.

[2] The right of your self (*nafs*) against you is that you employ it in obeying God; then you deliver to your tongue its right, to your hearing its right, to your sight its right, to your hand its right, to your leg its right, to your stomach its right, to your private part its right, and you seek help from God in all that.

[3] The right of the tongue is that you consider it too noble for obscenity, accustom it to good, refrain from any meddling in which there is nothing to be gained, express kindness to the people, and speak well concerning them.

[4] The right of hearing is to keep it pure from listening to backbiting (*ghiba*) and listening to that to which it is unlawful to listen.

[5] The right of sight is that you lower it before everything which is unlawful to you and that you take heed whenever you look at anything.

[6] The right of your hand is that you stretch it not toward that which is unlawful to you.

[7] The right of your two legs is that you walk not with them toward that which is unlawful to you. You have no escape from standing upon the narrow bridge (*al-sirat* [over hell]), so you should see to it that your legs do not slip and cause you to fall into the Fire.

[8] The right of your stomach is that you make it not into a container for that which is unlawful to you and you eat no more than your fill (*shib'*).

[9] The right of your private part (*farj*) is that you protect it from fornication and guard it against being looked upon.

[B. RIGHT OF ACTS]

[10] The right of your ritual prayer (*salat*) is that you know that it is an arrival before God and that through it you are standing before Him. When you know that, then you will stand in the station of him who is lowly, vile, beseeching, trembling, hopeful, fearful, and abased, and you will magnify Him who is before you through stillness and dignity. You will approach the prayer with your heart and you will perform it according to its bounds and its rights.

[11] The right of the *hajj* is that you know it is an arrival before your Lord and a flight to Him from your sins; through it your repentance is accepted and you perform an obligation made incumbent upon you by God.

[12] The right of fasting is that you know it is a veil which God has set up over your tongue, your hearing, your sight, your stomach, and your private part to protect you from the Fire. If you abandon the fast, you will have torn God's protective covering away from yourself.

[13] The right of charity (*sadaqa*) is that you know it is a storing away with your Lord and a deposit for which you will have no need for witnesses. If you deposit it in secret, you will be more confident

of it than if you deposit it in public. You should know that it repels afflictions and illnesses from you in this world and it will repel the Fire from you in the next world.

[14] The right of the offering (*hady*) is that through it you desire God and you not desire His creation; through it you desire only the exposure of your soul to God's mercy and the deliverance of your spirit on the day you encounter Him.

[C1. RIGHTS OF LEADERS]

[15] The right of the possessor of authority (*sultan*) is that you know that God has made you a trial (*fitna*) for him. God is testing him through the authority He has given him over you. You should not expose yourself to his displeasure, for thereby you cast yourself by your own hands into destruction and become his partner in his sin when he brings evil down upon you.

[16] The right of the one who trains you (*sa'is*) through knowledge is magnifying him, respecting his sessions, listening well to him, and attending to him with devotion. You should not raise your voice toward him. You should never answer anyone who asks him about something, in order that he may be the one who answers. You should not speak to anyone in his session nor speak ill of anyone with him. If anyone ever speaks ill of him in your presence, you should defend him. You should conceal his faults and make manifest his virtues. You should not sit with him in enmity or show hostility toward him in friendship. If you do all of this, God's angels will give witness for you that you went straight to him and learned his knowledge for God's sake, not for the sake of the people.

[17] The right of him who trains you through property is that you should obey him and not disobey him, unless obeying him would displease God, for there can be no obedience to a creature when it is disobedience to God.

[C2. RIGHTS OF SUBJECTS]

[18] The right of your subjects through authority is that you should know that they have been made subjects through their weakness

and your strength. Hence it is incumbent upon you to act with justice toward them and to be like a compassionate father toward them. You should forgive them their ignorance and not hurry them to punishment and you should thank God for the power over them which He has given to you.

[19] The right of your subjects through knowledge is that you should know that God made you a caretaker over them only through the knowledge He has given you and His storehouses which He has opened up to you. If you do well in teaching the people, not treating them roughly or annoying them, then God will increase His bounty toward you. But if you withhold your knowledge from people or treat them roughly when they seek knowledge from you, then it will be God's right to deprive you of knowledge and its splendour and to make you fall from your place in people's hearts.

[20] The right of your wife (*zawja*) is that you know that God has made her a repose and a comfort for you; you should know that she is God's favor toward you, so you should honor her and treat her gently. Though her right toward you is more incumbent, you must treat her with compassion, since she is your prisoner (*asir*) whom you feed and clothe. If she is ignorant, you should pardon her.

[21] The right of your slave (*mamluk*) is that you should know that he is the creature of your Lord, the son of your father and mother, and your flesh and blood. You own him, but you did- not make him; God made him. You did not create any one of his limbs, nor do you provide him with his sustenance; on the contrary, God gives you the sufficiency for that. Then He subjugated him to you, entrusted him to you, and deposited him with you so that you may be safeguarded by the good you give to him. So act well toward him, just as God has acted well toward you. If you dislike him, replace him, but do not torment a creature of God. And there is no strength save in God.

[C3. RIGHTS OF WOMB RELATIVES]

[22] The right of your mother is that you know that she carried you where no one carries anyone, she gave to you of the fruit of her heart that which no one gives to anyone, and she protected you with all her organs. She did not care if she went hungry as long as you ate, if she was thirsty as long as you drank, if she was naked as long as you were clothed, if she was in the sun as long as you were in the shade. She gave up sleep for your sake, she protected you from heat and cold, all in order that you might belong to her. You will not be able to show her gratitude, unless through God's help and giving success.

[23] The right of your father is that you know that he is your root. Without him, you would not be. Whenever you see anything in yourself which pleases you, know that your father is the root of its blessing upon you. So praise God and thank Him in that measure. And there is no strength save in God.

[24] The right of your child is that you should know that he is from you and will be ascribed to you, through both his good and his evil, in the immediate affairs of this world. You are responsible for what has been entrusted to you, such as educating him in good conduct (*husn al-adab*), pointing him in the direction of his Lord, and helping him to obey Him. So act toward him with the action of one who knows that he will be rewarded for good doing toward him and punished for evildoing.

[25] The right of your brother is that you know that he is your hand, your might, and your strength. Take him not as a weapon with which to disobey God, nor as equipment with which to wrong God's creatures. Do not neglect to help him against his enemy or to give him good counsel. If he obeys God, well and good, but if not, you should honor God more than him. And there is no strength save in God.

[D. RIGHTS OF OTHERS]

[26] The right of your master (*mawla*) who has favored you [by freeing you from slavery] is that you know that he has spent his

property for you and brought you out of the abasement and estrangement of bondage to the exaltation and comfort of freedom. He has freed you from the captivity of possession and loosened the bonds of slavehood from you. He has brought you out of prison, given you ownership of yourself, and given you leisure to worship your Lord. You should know that he is the closest of God's creatures to you in your life and your death and that aiding him with your life and what he needs from you is incumbent upon you. And there is no strength save in God.

[27] The right of the slave (*mawla*) whom you have favored [by freeing him] is that you know that God has made your freeing him a means of access to Him and a veil against the Fire. Your immediate reward is to inherit from him-if he does not have any maternal relatives-as a compensation for the property you have spent for him, and your ultimate reward is the Garden.

[28] The right of him who does a kindly act (*dhu l-ma'ruf*) toward you is that you thank him and mention his kindness; you reward him with beautiful words and you supplicate for him sincerely in that which is between you and God. If you do that, you have thanked him secretly and openly. Then, if you are able to repay him one day, you repay him.

[29] The right of the muezzin is that you know that he is reminding you of your Lord, calling you to your good fortune, and helping you to accomplish what God has made obligatory upon you. So thank him for that just as you thank one who does good to you.

[30] The right of your imam in your ritual prayer is that you know that he has taken on the role of mediator between you and your Lord. He speaks for you, but you do not speak for him; he supplicates for you, but you do not supplicate for him. He has spared you the terror of standing before God. If he performs the prayer imperfectly, that belongs to him and not to you; but if he performs it perfectly, you are his partner, and he has no excellence over you. So protect yourself through him, protect your prayer through his prayer, and thank him in that measure.

[31] The right of your sitting companion (*jalis*) is that you treat him mildly, show fairness toward him while vying with him in discourse, and do not stand up from sitting with him without his permission. But it is permissible for him who sits with you to leave without asking your permission. You should forget his slips and remember his good qualities, and you should tell nothing about him but good.

[32] The right of your neighbor (*jar*) is that you guard him when he is absent, honor him when he is present, and aid him when he is wronged. You do not pursue anything of his that is shameful; if you know of any evil from him, you conceal it. If you know that he will accept your counsel, you counsel him in that which is between him and you. You do not forsake him in difficulty, you release him from his stumble, you forgive his sin, and you associate with him generously. And there is no strength save in God.

[33] The right of the companion (*sahib*) is that you act as his companion with bounty and in fairness. You honor him as he honors you and you do not let him be the first to act with generosity. If he is the first, you repay him. You wish for him as he wishes for you and you restrain him from any act of disobedience he might attempt. Be a mercy for him, not a chastisement. And there is no strength save in God.

[34] The right of the partner (*sharik*) is that if he should be absent, you suffice him in his affairs, and if he should be present, you show regard for him. You make no decision without his decision and you do nothing on the basis of your own opinion, but you exchange views with him. You guard his property for him, and you do not betray him in that of his affair which is difficult or of little importance, for God's hand is above the hands of two partners as long as they do not betray each other. And there is no strength save in God.

[35] The right of your property (*mal*) is that you take it only from what is lawful and you spend it only in what is proper. Through it you should not prefer above yourself those who will not praise you. You should act with it in obedience to your Lord and not be miserly with it, lest you fall back into regret and remorse while suffering the ill consequence. And there is no strength save in God.

[36] The right of him to whom you owe a debt (*al-gharim alladhi yutalibuka*) is that, if you have the means, you pay him back, and if you are in straitened circumstances, you satisfy him with good words and you send him away with gentleness.

[37] The right of the associate (*khalit*) is that you neither mislead him, nor act dishonestly toward him, nor deceive him, and you fear God in his affair.

[38] The right of the adversary (*khasm*) who has a claim against you is that, if what he claims against you is true, you give witness to it against yourself. You do not wrong him and you give him his full due. If what he claims against you is false, you act with kindness toward him and you show nothing in his affair other than kindness; you do not displease your Lord in his affair. And there is no strength save in God.

[39] The right of the adversary against whom you have a claim is that, if your claim against him is true, you maintain polite moderation in speaking to him and you do not deny his right. If your claim is false, you fear God, repent to Him, and abandon your claim.

[40] The right of him who asks you for advice (*mustashir*) is that, if you consider that he has a correct opinion, you advise him to follow it, and if you do not consider it so, you direct him to someone who does consider it so.

[41] The right of him whom you ask for advice (*mushir*) is that you do not make accusations against him for an opinion which does not conform to your own opinion. If it conforms to it, you praise God.

[42] The right of him who asks your counsel (*mustansih*) is that you give him your counsel, but you conduct yourself toward him with compassion and kindness.

[43] The right of your counselor (*nasih*) is that you act gently toward him and give ear to him. If he presents you with the right course, you praise God, but if he does not agree with you, you show compassion toward him and make no accusations against

him; you consider him to have made a mistake, and you do not take him to task for that, unless he should be deserving of accusation. Then attach no more importance to his affair. And there is no strength save in God.

[44] The right of him who is older than you (*kabir*) is that you show reverence toward him because of his age and you honor him because he entered Islam before you. You leave off confronting him in a dispute, you do not precede him in a path, you do not go ahead of him, and you do not consider him foolish. If he should act foolishly toward you, you put up with him and you honor him because of the right of Islam and the respect due to it.

[45] The right of him who is younger (*saghir*) is that you show compassion toward him through teaching him, pardoning him, covering his faults, kindness toward him, and helping him.

[46] The right of him who asks (*sa'il*) from you is that you give to him in the measure of his need.

[47] The right of him from whom you ask is that you accept from him with gratitude and recognition of his bounty if he gives, and you accept his excuse if he withholds.

[48] The right of him through whom God makes you happy (*surur*) is that you first praise God, then you thank the person.

[49] The right of him who does evil to you is that you pardon him. But if you know that your pardon will harm him, you defend yourself. God says, *Whosoever defends himself after he has been wronged - against them there is no way* (42:41).

[50] The right of the people of your creed (*milla*) is harboring safety for them, compassion toward them, kindness toward their evildoer, treating them with friendliness, seeking their well-being, thanking their good-doer, and keeping harm away from them. You should love for them what you love for yourself and dislike for them what you dislike for yourself. Their old men stand in the place of your father, their youths in the place of your brothers, their old

women in the place of your mother, and their young ones in the place of your children.

[51] The right of the people under the protection [of Islam] (*dhimma*) is that you accept from them what God has accepted from them and you do no wrong to them as long as they fulfill God's covenant.

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Al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyah: Supplication - 20

Supplication on Noble Moral Traits and Acts Pleasing to God

O God, bless Muhammad and his Household,
cause my faith to reach the most perfect faith,
make my certainty the most excellent certainty,
and take my intention to the best of intentions
and my works to the best of works!

O God, complete my intention through Thy gentleness,
rectify my certainty through what is with Thee,
and set right what is corrupt in me through Thy power!

O God, bless Muhammad and his Household,
spare me the concerns
which distract me,
employ me
in that about which Thou wilt ask me tomorrow,
and let me pass my days
in that for which Thou hast created me!
Free me from need,
expand Thy provision toward me,
and tempt me not with ingratitude!
Exalt me
and afflict me not with pride!
Make me worship Thee
and corrupt not my worship with self-admiration!
Let good flow out from my hands upon the people
and efface it not by my making them feel obliged!

Give me the highest moral traits
and preserve me from vainglory!

O God, bless Muhammad and his Household,
raise me not a single degree before the people
without lowering me its like in myself
and bring about no outward exaltation for me
without an inward abasement in myself to the same measure!

O God, bless Muhammad and Muhammad's Household,
give me to enjoy
a sound guidance
which I seek not to replace,
a path of truth
from which I swerve not,
and an intention of right conduct
in which I have no doubts!
Let me live as long as my life is a free gift in obeying Thee,
but if my life should become a pasture for Satan,
seize me to Thyself
before Thy hatred overtakes me
or Thy wrath against be becomes firm!

O God, deposit in me
no quality for which I will be faulted,
unless Thou settest it right,
no flaw for which I will be blamed,
unless Thou makest it beautiful,
no deficient noble trait,
unless Thou completest it!

O God, bless Muhammad and Muhammad's Household
and replace for me
the animosity of the people of hatred
with love,
the envy of the people of insolence
with affection,
the suspicion of the people of righteousness
with trust,
the enmity of those close

with friendship,
the disrespect of womb relatives
with devotion,
the abandonment of relatives
with help,
the attachment of flatterers
with love set right,
the rejection of fellows
with generous friendliness,
and the bitterness of the fear of wrongdoers
with the sweetness of security!

O God, bless Muhammad and his Household,
appoint for me
a hand against him who wrongs me,
a tongue against him who disputes with me,
and a victory over him who stubbornly resists me!
Give me guile against him who schemes against me,
power over him who oppresses me,
refutation of him who reviles me,
and safety from him who threatens me!
Grant me success to
obey him who points me straight
and follow him who guides me right!

O God, bless Muhammad and his Household
and point me straight to
resist him who is dishonest toward me
with good counsel,
repay him who separates from me
with gentle devotion,
reward him who deprives me
with free giving,
recompense him who cuts me off
with joining,
oppose him who slanders me
with excellent mention,
give thanks for good,
and shut my eyes to evil!

O God, bless Muhammad and his Household,
adorn me with the adornment of the righteous,
and clothe me in the ornaments of the godfearing, through
spreading justice,
restraining rage,
quenching the flame of hate,
bringing together the people of separation,
correcting discord,
spreading about good behavior,
covering faults,
mildness of temper,
lowering the wing,
beauty of conduct,
gravity of bearing,
agreeableness in comportment,
precedence in reaching excellence,
preferring bounteousness,
refraining from condemnation,
bestowing bounty on the undeserving,
speaking the truth,
though it be painful,
making little of the good in my words and deeds,
though it be much,
and making much of the evil in my words and deeds,
though it be little!
Perfect this for me through
lasting obedience,
holding fast to the community,
and rejecting
the people of innovation
and those who act in accordance with original opinions!

O God, bless Muhammad and his Household,
appoint for me
Thy widest provision in my old age
and Thy strongest strength when I am exhausted,
try me not with
laziness in worship of Thee,
blindness toward Thy path,
undertaking what opposes love for Thee,

joining with him who has separated himself from Thee,
and separating from him who has joined himself to Thee!

O God, make me
leap to Thee in times of distress,
ask from Thee in needs,
and plead to Thee in misery!
Tempt me not
to seek help from other than Thee
when I am distressed,
to humble myself in asking from someone else
when I am poor,
or to plead with someone less than Thee
when I fear,
for then I would deserve
Thy abandonment,
Thy withholding,
and Thy turning away,
O Most Merciful of the merciful!

O God, make
the wishing, the doubt, and the envy
which Satan throws into my heart
a remembrance of Thy mightiness,
a reflection upon Thy power,
and a devising against Thy enemy!
Make everything he causes to pass over my tongue,
- the indecent or ugly words,
the maligning of good repute,
the false witness,
the speaking ill of an absent man of faith
or the reviling of one present,
and all things similar - a speech in praise of Thee,
a pursual of eulogizing Thee,
an excursion in magnifying Thee,
a thanksgiving for Thy favor,
an acknowledgement of Thy beneficence,
and an enumeration of Thy kindnesses!

O God, bless Muhammad and his Household,

let me not be wronged
while Thou canst repel from me,
let me not do wrong
while Thou art powerful over holding me back,
let me not be misguided
while Thou art able to guide me,
let me not be poor
while with Thee is my plenty,
let me not be insolent
while from Thee comes my wealth!

O God, I come to Thy forgiveness,
I go straight to Thy pardon,
I yearn for Thy forbearance,
and I trust in Thy bounty,
but there is nothing with me
to make me warrant Thy forgiveness,
nothing in my works
to make me merit Thy pardon,
and nothing on my behalf
after I judge my soul
but Thy bounty,
so bless Muhammad and his Household
and bestow Thy bounty upon me!

O God, make my speech be guidance,
inspire me with reverential fear,
give me success in that which is most pure,
and employ me in what is most pleasing to Thee!
O God,
let me tread the most exemplary path
and make me live and die in Thy creed!

O God, bless Muhammad and his Household,
give me to enjoy moderation,
make me into one of
the people of right behavior,
the proofs of right conduct,
and the servants of righteousness,
and provide me with

triumph at the place of Return
and safety from the Ambush!

O God, take to Thyself from my soul
what will purify it
and leave for my soul that of my soul
that will set it right,
for my soul will perish
unless Thou preservest it!

O God, Thou art my stores when I sorrow,
Thou art my recourse when I am deprived,
from Thee I seek aid when troubled
and with Thee is
a substitute for everything gone by,
a correction for everything corrupted,
and a change from everything Thou disapprovest.
So show kindness to me with
well-being before affliction,
wealth before asking,
right conduct before misguidance;
suffice me against the burden of shame toward the servants,
give me security on the Day of Return,
and grant me excellent right guidance!

O God, bless Muhammad and his Household,
repel from me through Thy gentleness,
feed me through Thy favor,
set me right through Thy generosity,
heal me through Thy benefaction,
shade me in Thy shelter,
wrap me in Thy good pleasure,
and give me success to reach
the most guided of affairs when affairs confuse me,
the purest of works when works seem similar,
and the most pleasing to Thee of creeds when creeds conflict!

O God, bless Muhammad and his Household,
crown me with sufficiency,
place in me excellent guardianship,

give me to guide correctly,
tempt me not with plenty,
grant me excellent ease,
make not my life toil and trouble,
and refuse not my supplication in rejection,
for I make none rival to Thee
and I supplicate none with Thee as equal!

O God, bless Muhammad and his Household,
hold me back from prodigality,
fortify my provision against ruin,
increase my possessions through blessing them,
and set me upon the path of guidance
through piety in what I spend!

O God, bless Muhammad and his Household,
spare me the burden of earning,
and provide for me without reckoning,
lest I be distracted from Thy worship through seeking
and carry the load of earning's ill results!

O God, bestow upon me what I seek
through Thy power
and grant me sanctuary from what I fear
through Thy might!

O God, bless Muhammad and his Household,
save my face through ease,
and demean not my dignity through neediness,
lest I seek provision from those whom Thou hast provided
and asks for bestowal from the worst of Thy creatures!
Then I would be tried
by praising him who gave to me
and afflicted
with blaming him who held back from me,
while Thou - not they - art patron of giving and holding back.

O God, bless Muhammad and his Household
and provide me with
soundness in worship,

detachment in renunciation,
knowledge put into action,
and abstinence in measure!

O God, seal my term with Thy pardon,
verify my expectation in hoping for Thy mercy,
smooth my paths to reach Thy good pleasure,
and make my works good in all my states!

O God, bless Muhammad and his Household,
incite me to remember Thee
in times of heedlessness,
employ me in Thy obedience
in days of disregard,
open a smooth road for me
to Thy love,
and complete for me thereby the good
of this world and the next!

O God, and bless Muhammad and his Household
the best Thou hast blessed
any of Thy creatures before him
and wilt bless
any of them after him,
and give to us in this World good,
and in the next world good,
and protect me
through Thy mercy
from the chastisement of the Fire!

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His Wise Sayings and Teachings

The following is part of what it has been narrated on his authority.

❖ Dispraising Haughtiness

The Imam, peace be on him, dispraised haughtiness. He blamed the haughty for their evil qualities, which are the door to all evil

deeds and vices. The haughty think that other than them do not deserve life, hence they wrong men and show enmity toward them. The Imam, peace be on him, said: "I wonder at him who shows haughtiness and vainglory, while was as a sperm yesterday and will be a carrion tomorrow.

If the haughty carefully consider their beginning and their end, they will not show haughtiness and vainglory toward men, nor will they boast of their children and properties.

❖ From their Safe Place, the Careful are surprised

An example of his immortal wise sayings is these golden wonderful words. He, peace be on him, said: "From their safe place, the careful are surprised. The intelligent are content with the inspiration of speech. Explanation turns away from the ignorant one's heart. He does not avail himself of words, though eloquent, when he badly listens (to them)." As for the meanings of these pure words, they are as follows:

1. 'From his safe place, the careful are surprised,' means that kings and rules employ guards in order to protect them; nevertheless the guards themselves sometimes kill them.

2. It is the intelligent who understand affairs through the inspiration of speech and the contexts of states. In other words, they are in no need of wordiness.

3. Explanation turns away from the ignorant one's mind, for ignorance has covered it and turned it away from understanding affairs.

4. He who badly listens does not avail himself of pure, wise words, but he who carefully listens makes use of them.

❖ Warning against Disputes

The Imam, peace be on him, warned (the Muslims) against the dispute which leads them to overcoming and haughtiness, and not to the truth. He, peace be on him, said: "Dispute corrupts past

friendship and unties strong knots, for it leads to overcoming which is among the strongest reasons for unfamiliarity."

Dispute is a key to evil deeds, moves enmity and hatred among men, and causes to them many hardships and difficulties.

❖ Rejoicing over Sins

Rejoicing over sins indicates that the person goes to extremes in crime, hence the Imam, peace be on him, said: "Beware of rejoicing over sins, for rejoicing over sins is greater than committing them."

❖ Kinds of Sin

The Imam speaks about the kinds of sin which bring about Allah's wrath and chastisement. He warns man against them, that he may lead sound religion and world. He, peace be on him, said:

"The sins which alter blessings are: aggression against men, turning away from good habits, affected charity, showing ingratitude toward blessings, and leaving thanksgiving. Allah, the Exalted, said: 'Surely, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition.'

"The sins which bring about remorse are: murdering the soul which Allah has made unlawful (When Cain killed his brother Abel and was unable to bury him, Allah said: Hence he became among the remorseful.), leaving tightening bonds of kin until they are free from need, leaving the prayers until their times pass, leaving will and complaints, refraining from giving zakat until death comes and the tongue stops.

"The sins which draw down diversities are: disobeying the knowledgeable, showing insolence toward men, and ridiculing them.

"The sins which repel blessings are: displaying poverty, sleep during noon and evening prayers' times, disdaining blessings, and complaints against Allah.

"The sins which tear apart safeguards are: drinking wine, playing gamble, chatter and joking which make men laugh, mentioning the defects of men, and sitting with the people of doubt.

"The sins which draw down tribulations are: leaving relieving the grieved, leaving helping the wronged, refraining from enjoining the good and forbidding the evil.

"The sins which empower the enemies are: declaring oppression and dissoluteness publicly, making the prohibited permissible, showing disobedience toward the good, and following the evil.

"The sins which hasten annihilation are: cutting the ties of the womb, sinful oath, false words, fornication, obstructing the path of the Muslims, and claiming the Imam ate without right.

"The sins which cut off expectations are: despair of Allah's repose, desperation of Allah's mercy, trust in other than Allah, and denying Allah's promise.

"The sins which make air black are: magic, soothsaying, faith in the stars, denying (Allah's) decree, and showing disobedience to parents.

"The sins which remove the covering are: borrowing a loan without intention to repay it, spending lavishly on falsehood, showing stinginess toward family, children, and the blood relations, misconduct, the paucity of patience, employing boredom, and disdaining the people of religion.

"The sins which hold back supplication are: evil intention, wicked inner self, showing hypocrisy toward brothers, leaving giving truthful answer, delaying the obligatory prayers until their times pass, leaving nearness to Allah through charity and alms, employing obscene words, untruth, concealing witness, refraining from giving zakat, loan, and food, displaying curliness toward the poor and the needy, oppressing orphans and widows, scolding and repelling the beggar at night.

❖ The Reality of Death

The Imam, peace be on him, described the reality of death of believers and unbelievers with these words of him: "The death of a believer is like taking off dirty garments and replacing them with excellent ones. It is like riding the lowest mounts and untying heavy fetters. The death of an unbeliever is like taking off excellent garments and replacing them with the dirtiest and most coarse ones. It is like moving from intimate houses to lonely ones.

Many traditions have been narrated on the authority of the Imam s of guidance. They say: "The world is the prison of a believer and garden of an unbeliever." When the believer is about to die, he finds no difficulty in death. He finds the greatest comfort; for he will soon move to Paradise. When the unbeliever faces death, he finds it unhappiness and tribulation. He faces it with regret and pain; for he will move from a garden to a lasting chastisement in a prison.

❖ The Most Important Degrees of Asceticism

A person questioned Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, peace be on him, about asceticism, and he replied: "Asceticism is of ten degrees: The highest degree of asceticism is the lowest degree of piety. The highest degree of piety is the lowest degree of certainty. The highest degree of certainty is the lowest degree of satisfaction. Asceticism is in one verse of Allah's Book: Hence that you may not grieve for what has escaped you, nor be exultant at what He has given you."

❖ This tradition contains some gnostic realities. They are as follows:

A. The highest degree of asceticism does not equal the lowest degree of abstaining from the things which Allah has made unlawful. Abstaining from such things results from setting right soul and controlling it.

B. Piety is the highest degree of faith (in Allah), yet the highest degree of it is the lowest degree of certainty of Allah, the Exalted.

C. Certitude is the essence of faith, yet the highest degree of it is lowest degree of satisfaction with what Allah has apportioned.

D. The Holy Verse includes the reality of asceticism. It warns man against grief and sorrow for the interests which escape him in this world. Besides it warns him against rejoicing over the pleasures he earns.

❖ The Best Deeds in the View of Allah

The Imam, peace be on him, was asked about the best deeds in the view of Allah, and he answered: "After recognizing Allah and His Messenger, the best deed in Allah's eyes is detesting the world. This has many branches.

Disobedience has also many branches. Self-admiration was the first act of disobedience. It made Satan refuse to (prostrate himself for Adam), show haughtiness, and unbeliever.

Envy was the sin of Adam's son. It made him kill his brother. From this branched love for women, the world, presidency, ease, words, superiority, and wealth. They have become seven qualities and come together in love for the world. After recognizing these qualities, the prophets and the scholars said: "Love for the world is the root of every sin, and the world is an abode of tribulation."

Surely, love for the world is the foundation of tribulation, source of discords and dangers which befall man. It leads man to sins and offenses and throws him into great evil. The Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned the blights which result from love for the world. Some of them are as follows:

1. Self-admiration.

2. Envy.

3. Love for men and presidency.

4. Love for ease.

5. Love for words (which do not concern and mean the person).

6. Love for superiority over the others.

7. Love for wealth.

These blights deviate man from the right path, and throw him into sins.

❖ Recognizing Justice

The following tradition is one of the Imam's wise sayings. In it the Imam defines man's justice and reliability. He, peace be on him, said: "If you see a man show good appearance and guidance, goes too far in his words, and pretends obedience through his movements, then be slow, let him not deceive you. Many are those who are incapable of obtaining the world and committing the unlawful therein. As he is frail in body, abased, and fainthearted, he sets up religion as snare for himself. He is still deceiving men through his appearance. When he is capable of an unlawful thing, he plunges into it. If you see him show chastity toward unlawful property, then be slow, let him not deceive you. For the desires of the creatures are various.

Many are those who affect refusal toward the unlawful, though be it much. He carries himself on an ugly, ill-omened horse, and commits an unlawful thing through it. If you see him in such a state, then be slow, let him not deceive you, until you see the firmness of his intellect. Many are those who leave all of this, then they do not return to firm intellect, hence what they corrupt through their ignorance is more than what they set right through their intellects.

If you find his intellect firm, then be slow, let him not deceive you, until you see whether his caprice overcomes his intellect or his intellect overcomes his caprice, whether he loves false presidency or abstains from it. For some people leave the world for the world. They think that the pleasure of false presidency is better than that of lawful properties and blessings, hence they leave all of this and seek presidency. When it is said to him, fear Allah; pride carries

him off to sin; therefore hell is sufficient for him; and certainly it is an evil resting-place. He behaves at random.

His first falsehood leads him to the utmost loss. His farfetched demand take him to what he cannot accomplish through his tyranny. Hence he makes lawful what Allah has made unlawful. He makes unlawful what Allah has made lawful. He pays no attention to his religion when it escapes him, as long as he assumes presidency, for which he has tired himself. Then, it is those with whom Allah has become angry, whom He has cursed, and for whom He has prepared a painful chastisement.

"However, the best man is he who makes his caprice follow Allah's command, uses his abilities according to Allah's decree, regards abasement during the truth as nearer to immortal glory than false glory, and knows that its little ordeal, which he bears, leads to permanent bliss in an abode which does not perish nor does it run out, whose plentiful joy will follow him. When he follows his caprice, it leads him to a chastisement which does not cease nor does it remove.

Hence cling to this man, follow his sunna (practices), and seek access through him to Allah, for his supplication is not refused nor does his demand fail."

❖ The Qualities of Hypocrites and Believers

The Imam, peace be on him, stated the following tradition, explaining some qualities of hypocrites and believers. He said: "The hypocrite prohibits (men from doing evil deeds), but he does not (refrain from them). He enjoins (men to do good deeds), but he does not do (them). When he stands for prayers, he objects (its legislation). When he bows down (in prayer), he shows laziness. When he prostrates himself (in prayer), he pecks (i.e. he performs prostration as quick as bird peck at the corn). When he enters into evening, his concern is dinner. He does not fast. When he rises in the morning, his concern is sleep. He does not stay awake at night.

"As for the believer, he mixes his knowledge with his clemency. He sits in order to learn and listens in order to be free (from faults).

He does not tell anyone about trust even his friends. He does not conceal witness for those far. He does not do any of the truth for dissimulation nor does he leave it out of modesty. When men praise him, he is afraid of their words. He asks Allah's forgiveness for what they do not know. Those who ignore him do not harm him."

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Some excellent Pieces of Advice

The Imam, peace be on him, gave his companions these excellent pieces of advice:

- "You have no right to sit with whomever you like, for Allah (the Blessed, the Exalted) says: And when you see those who enter into false discourses about Our communications, withdraw from them until they enter into some other discourse, and if Satan causes you to forget, then do not sit after recollection with the unjust people.
- You have no right to say whatever you like, for Allah, the Exalted, says: And follow not what you have no knowledge of. And for Allah's messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, says: 'May Allah have mercy on a servant who says good (words) and wins (them) or he keeps silent and is safe.' You have no right to listen to whatever you like, for Allah, the Most High, says: Surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that."
- If Muslims put into effect these excellent pieces of advice, they will earn immense good and be safe from evil.

❖ Help and Beneficence

Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, peace be on him, urged his companions and followers (Shi'ites) to aid each other and to show beneficence toward one another, for such an act is the best guarantee for their unity. Many traditions in this respect have been handed down from him. The following is some of them:

1. "The highest of you in degree, and the best of you in palaces and buildings (i.e. in the Garden) are those who respond to the believers and help their poor ones. Allah brings near those who say good words to their poor brothers, though they are from among those who will be chastised in the Fire. Therefore, disdain not beneficence to your brothers, for it will profit you when nothing replaces it.

2. He who passes night full and there is in his presence a hungry believer, Allah, the Exalted, says to His angels: Bear witness against this servant. I ordered him, but he disobeyed Me and obeyed other than Me, hence I charged him with his work. By My mightiness and majesty, I will never forgive him.

3. He who has an extra garment, knows that there is in his presence a believer who needs it, and does not give it to him, Allah will throw him down in the Fire.

4. I feel shame of my Lord when I ask Him for the Garden, while I do not give a dirham or a dinar to one of my brothers. It will be said to me on the Day of Resurrection: 'If the Garden belonged to you, you would be stingier with it.

5. He who gives food to a believer until he becomes full, he will get a wage of which neither an angel brought nigh nor a prophet sent out know except the Lord of the worlds." He added: "Among the things which make forgiveness obligatory is giving food to a hungry Muslim." Then he read these words of Him, the Exalted: "Or the giving of food in a day of hunger to an orphan, having relationship, or to the poor lying in the dust."

6. He who accomplishes his brother's need, Allah will grant him a hundred needs. He who relieves his brother's sorrow, Allah will relieve his sorrow on the Day of Resurrection, whatever it may be. He who helps his brother against a wrongdoer, Allah will help him pass al-Sira`t when legs shake.

He who strives to fulfill his brother's need and pleases him with fulfilling it, he pleases Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family. He who gives water to his brother to quench his thirst,

Allah will let him drink of a pure drink which is sealed (to others). He who gives food to his hungry brother, Allah will let him eat from the fruits of the Garden. He who clothes his naked brother, Allah will make him wear silk and brocade.

He who clothes his undressed brother, Allah will guarantee him as long as there is a thread of the garment on (the body of) the clothed one. He who removes his brother's worries, Allah will make youths serve him. He who carries his brother on a she-camel, Allah will raise him from the dead on one of the she-camels of the Garden for which he will vie with the angels. He who shrouds his brother when he dies, Allah will clothe him from the day when his mother borne him until he dies. He who marries his brother to an intimate wife, Allah will make him intimate in his grave with the most beloved of his family. He who visits his sick brother, the angels will surround him and supplicate for him until he leaves, and they say: 'You are agreeable, and the Garden is agreeable for you.' By Allah, accomplishing a need is more lovable with Allah than fasting successive months in the Sacred Months.

7. Men will be resurrected naked, hungry, and thirsty. Hence he who clothes a believer in this world, Allah will clothe him in the garments of the Garden. He who gives food to a believer, Allah will give him food of the fruits of the Garden. He who gives a believer a drink of water in this world, Allah will let him drink of a pure drink that is sealed (to others).

8. He who gives food to a hungry believer, Allah will give him food of the fruits of the Garden. He who gives water to a thirsty believer, Allah will let him drink of a pure drink that is sealed (to others). He who clothes a naked believer, Allah will cover him over and protect him as long as there is a rag of the garment (on the body of the clothed one).

❖ Tightening the Bonds of Kin

The Imam, peace be on him, urged the Muslims to tighten the bonds of kin and warned them against cutting them off. He, peace be on him, said: "He who wants Allah to prolong his span and give him a plentiful provision, let him tighten the bonds of kin, for the

womb relatives will say with eloquent tongues on the Day of Resurrection: 'O Lord, tighten him who tightened us, and cut him off who cut us off.' One will be seen on the good path. If the womb relatives, whom he cut off, come to him, they will descend him to the bottom of the Fire.1"

Many authentic traditions have been handed down from the Imam of guidance, peace be on them, about tightening the bonds of kin. They indicate that such bonds prolong man's span, increase his provision, double his reward in the hereafter, strengthen society, and spread affection among the Muslims.

❖ Love for the Sake of Allah

The Imam, peace be on him, summoned the Muslims to love each other and to show affection toward one another for the sake of Allah, not for this material perishing world. He, peace be on him, said: "When Allah bring together those first and last, men will hear a caller ask: 'Where are those who loved each other for the sake of Allah?' Some people will stand. It will be said to them: 'Go to the Garden without reckoning.' The angels will receive them and ask them about the work through which they enter the Garden. They will answer: 'It is we who loved one another for the sake of Allah.' The angels will ask them: 'What was your act?' They will reply: 'We loved those who loved Allah, and hated those who hated Him.' Hence the angels will say to them: 'Excellent is the reward of the workers.

Love for the sake of Allah unifies Muslims; it does not divide them. It brings them together and does not scatter them, for it results from firm faith in Allah.

❖ Supplication for Believers

The Imam, peace be on him, urged the believers to supplicate for their Muslim brothers when absent, and to praise them. He, peace be on him, said: "When the angels hear a believer supplicating for his absent brother, they say: 'What an excellent brother for your brother you are! You supplicate for him with good when he is absent, and remember him with goodness. Allah has given you two

likes of what you supplicated for him, and praised you two likes of what you praised him. You did him a favor.' When they hear him mention his brother with evil and supplicate against him, they say to him:

'What a bad brother for your brother you are! Refrain from this, O you whose sins and defects have been covered! Take care of yourself! Praise Allah who has covered you over! Know that Allah knows His servant more than you!

These noble moral traits strengthen the unity and solidarity of Muslims, spread affection and brotherhood among them.

❖ Repayment of the Virtuous

The Imam, peace be on him, urged his companions to show virtue toward men as well as he summoned them to be patient and to help each other. He, peace be on him, said: "A caller will call on the Day of Resurrection: 'Let the virtuous stand!' Some people will stand before reckoning. It will be said to them: 'Go to the Garden!' The angels receive them and ask them where they go. They reply: 'To the Garden.' When the angels ask them about the work through which they deserve the Garden, they answer: 'When men showed ignorance toward us, we showed forbearance toward them. When they wronged us, were patient. When they mistreated us, we pardoned them.'

Hence it will be said to them: 'Enter the Garden! Excellent is the reward of the workers.' Then a caller will call: 'Let the patient stand.' Some people will stand. It will be said to them: 'Go to the Garden!' The angels receive them and ask them as they ask the first group, and they reply: 'We habituated ourselves to obey Allah, and we habituated them to refrain from disobeying Him.'

Hence the angels will say to them: 'Enter the Garden! Excellent is the reward of the workers.' Then a caller will call: 'Let the neighbors of Allah, the Great and Almighty, stand!' Some people will stand. It will be said to them: 'Go to the Garden!' The angels will ask them about the work through which they deserve the Garden and about their neighborhood to Allah, the Great and

Almighty. They will reply: 'We visited each other for the sake of Allah. We sat with one another for the sake of Allah. We exchanged (gifts) with each other for the sake of Allah.' Hence the angels will say: 'Enter the Garden! Excellent is the reward of the workers.

❖ Summons to Religion

A man came to the Imam, peace be on him, and asked him about the summons to the religion, and he, peace be on him, answered: "Summon (men) to Allah, the Most High, and His religion through two ways: Make them recognize Allah, and work for the sake of His good pleasure. As for the recognition of Allah, it is that you make (them) know that Allah is One, Compassionate, Merciful, knowledgeable, Powerful over all things, eyes attain Him not, and He attains eyes, and He is the All-subtle, the Expert, that Mohammed is His servant and messenger, what he brought was the truth from Allah, the Exalted, and that other than them is falsehood. If they accept this, they will have rights just as those of the Muslims, and there will be rights against them just as those against the Muslims.

The summons to the religion and embracing it depend on recognizing Allah, the Most High, faith in His Unity, and confessing the prophecy of the greatest Messenger, may Allah bless him and his Household. He who follows these two affairs will be treated according to the Islamic rules, such as refraining from shedding his blood, safeguarding his properties, and treating him in the same manner in which Muslims are treated.

❖ Warning against some Unlawful Things

The Imam, peace be on him, warned (the Muslims) against committing some unlawful things, for they send man away from his Lord and throw him into great evil. He, peace be on him, said: "Guard against all the unlawful things. Know that backbiting your believing brother(who is among the Shi'ites of the House of Mohammed, may Allah bless him and his Household(is more unlawful than eating (meat) of the dead (animals). Allah, the Most High, said:

'...nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? But you abhor it. Drinking blood is less unlawful for you than informing an unjust sovereign of your believing brother, who is among the Shi'ites of the House of Mohammed, may Allah bless him and his Household. For you perish yourselves, you believing brother, and the sovereign. Eating the flesh of a pig is less unlawful for you than your honoring those whom Allah has belittled, naming them with our names, the Ahl al-Bayt, and giving them our nick-names, while Allah has named them the sinners, and given them the nick-name of the licentious.

(The animal) over which any other (name) than (that of) Allah is invoked is less unlawful for you than making a marriage contract or performing a congregational prayer with our enemies, who have usurped our rights, unless you practice precautionary dissimulation. Allah, the Most High, says: '...but whoever is driven to necessity, not desiring, nor exceeding the limit, no sin shall be on him.1" If someone is obedient to Allah, but necessity forces him to practice one of these unlawful things, no sin shall be on him.

The Imam, peace be on him, warned (the Muslims) against committing all the unlawful things, and he especially stressed refraining from the following unlawful things:

A. Backbiting, for it divides Muslims, spreads hatred and enmity among them. It is certain that he who has firm faith in Allah turns away from it. In many of his pieces of advice, the Imam, peace be on him, warned (the Muslims) against it. A man said to him: "Someone accuses you of misguidance and innovation." The Imam blamed the man for this and said to him:

"You did not conform to the right of sitting with the man when you informed us of his words, nor did you conform to my right when you told me about my brother what I had not known. Death includes all of us. Resurrection will be the place of our gathering. The Day of Judgment will be our appointment, and Allah will decide among us. Beware of backbiting, for it is the food of the dogs of the people of the Fire.

B. Informing an unjust sovereign against a believer: It is a serious offense, for it leads to an inclusive destruction.

C. Giving the noble nick-names of the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be on them, to those unjust who spread tyranny and corruption in that time.

D. Communicating and working with the unjust: They strengthen their position and raise up their importance. These are some contents of the words of the Imam, peace be on him.

❖ Warning against Craving

The Imam, peace be on him, summoned to freedom from the abasement of craving. He, peace be on him, said: "I have seen all good come together in cutting off craving for what is in men's hands. He who beseeches not men for a thing, and entrust all his affairs to Allah, Allah will respond to him in all things.

Dangerous blights result from craving. They lead man to destruction and throw him into great evil. The Imam summoned man to free himself from craving, that he might be perfected and sublime.

❖ Showing Gratitude toward Good-doer

The Imam, peace be on him, underlined the necessity for showing gratitude toward good-doers, that good deeds may not be lost. He, peace be on him, said: "Allah, the Most High, loves every sad heart and every grateful servant. On the Day of Judgment, He will say to His servant: 'Did you thank so-and-so?' The servant will say: 'I thanked You, my Lord.' Allah, the Glorified, will say to him: 'You did not thank me because you did not thank him.'"

After this the Imam added: "The most grateful of you (to Allah) is he who thanks the people.

Giving thanks to a benefactor or a good-doer is a pressing Islamic necessity, that people may continue kind acts.

❖ Enjoining the Good

Enjoining the good and forbidding the evil are two of the most prominent Islamic principles. Islam has positively adopted them, that social justice may spread among men, that no evil deed, no aggression, and no oppression may stay in the general life of people. In this connection many authentic traditions have been handed down from the Imam s of guidance, peace be on them. Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, peace be on him, said: "He who leaves enjoining the good and forbidding the evil is like him who leaves Allah's Book behind him, unless he shows precautionary dissimulation." The Imam was asked about precautionary dissimulation, and he answered: "(He practices it) when he is afraid of a tyrannical ruler.

Fear of a tyrannical ruler makes it not incumbent on person to enjoin the good and forbid the evil. The jurists have mentioned in their practical treatises the conditions of performing this Islamic, important obligation.

❖ Speech is better than Silence

A person asked the Imam, peace be on him: "Which is better-speech or silence?" "Each has blights," answered the Imam, "when they are sound of blights, speech is better."

Another person asked him: "How is this, son of Allah's Apostle?"

The Imam, peace be on him, replied: "Allah, the Glorified, sent the prophets and the trustees (of authority) to speak, not to keep silent. (They did not) deserve the Garden through silence; rather through speech. I cannot equate the sun with the moon.

❖ The Happiness of Man

The Imam, peace be on him, talked about the things which made man happy in the world. He said: "One is happy when his daily bread is in his homeland, his friends are righteous, and has a son through whom he seeks help.

Indeed, he who has these things wins all the good of the world, and is therein among the happy.

- Mutual Teachings among Religions

A man asked the Imam, peace be on him: "What are the common teachings among religions?" "Saying the truth, ruling with justice, and fulfilling promise," replied the Imam. Heavenly religions share these three items, which are the foundation of social life, and for which all the prophets and messenger sacrificed their lives.

- Noble Traits

The Imam, peace be on him, spoke about some noble qualities by which the Muslim should be distinguished, and through which his Islam is perfect. He, peace be on him, said: "He who has four (traits), his Islam is perfect, his sins are forgiven, and he will meet his Lord, the Great and almighty, and He is satisfied with him: sincerity to Allah, the Great and almighty, through fulfilling men's rights against him, telling men the truth, shame of everything ugly in the view of Allah and of men, and showing good manners toward his family.

He who has these outstanding traits is in deed a believer, has perfect faith, meets Allah, and He is satisfied with him.

- The Qualities of a Believer

The Imam, peace be on him, said: "The qualities of a believer are five." Tawus al-Yamani asked him: "What are they, son of Allah's Apostle?" He replied: "Piety in privacy, alms during paucity, patience toward misfortune, clemency during anger, and truthfulness during fear.

- These five qualities display the faith of a believer.
  - Good Words

The Imam, peace be on him, urged his companions to say good words to men, and mentioned the profits which resulted from them.

He said: "Good words increase property, develop provision, delay death, make men love each other, and lead to the Garden."

This tradition of the Imam, peace be on him, contains the outcomes of good words, of which is the following:

A. Property is developed, and provision is plentiful. This can clearly be seen through manufacturers, workmen, and traders. Men deal with those who treat them with good words, and such a treatment increases one's income. They hate those who treat them with obscene words, hence this treatment brings about business stagnancy and narrow provision.

B. Death is deferred. This is when one saves a believer from wrongdoing or does him a favor. In this state Allah repays him through prolonging his span in this world and increasing his wage in the next.

C. One is beloved and dear with his family and his relatives, for souls incline to the owner of good words and perfect moral traits.

D. Attaining the Garden. This is when good words are employed to settle enmity, to enjoin the good, and to forbid the evil.

- The Classes of Men

The Imam, peace be on him, told Zara`ra b. Awfa` about the classes of men. He said to him: "O Zarara, the men in our time are six classes: Lions, wolves, foxes, dogs, pigs, and ewes. As for the lions, they are the kings of the world; they like to overcome each other. As for the wolves, they are your traders, who dispraise (commodities) when they buy them, and praise (them) when they sell (them). As for the foxes, they are those who eat through their religions, and describe through their tongues what is not in their hearts. As for the dogs, they are those who shout at people through their tongues, and men honor them out of fear of their evil tongues. As for the pigs, they are the womanlike, who respond to every atrocity when they are invited to it. As for the ewes, they are the believers whose hair is cut, whose flesh is eaten, whose bones

are broken. What do the ewes do toward the lions, the wolves, the foxes, the dogs, and the pigs?

The Imam, peace be on him, carefully considered the society in which he lived, classified it into six classes, and mentioned the appropriate characteristics of each class.

- Humbleness

As for humbleness, it is among the noble moral traits through which man becomes exalted. The Imam, peace be on him, urged (the Muslims) to follow this trait. He said: "A Qarashi or an Arab has no lineage save through humbleness. There is no nobility but through Allah-fearingness. There is no act except through an intention. The most detestable of men in the view of Allah, the Great and Almighty, is he who follows an Imam's sunna (words), but does not follow his practices.

- Quoting Wisdom

The Imam, peace be on him, summoned (the Muslims) to quote wisdom even from hypocrites, for it is among the sources of thought and awareness which Islam develops. He, peace be on him, said: "Disdain not the precious pearl which you bring out of mean sweepings, for my father related to me, he said: 'The wise word frequents in the hypocrite's chest, disputing (with him for going) to those who understand it, until he says it. When a believer hears it, he takes it, and hence is worthier of it.'

- The Clay of Believer and Unbeliever

In a tradition of his, the Imam, peace be on him, spoke about the clay of a believer and an unbeliever. He said: "Allah, the Great and Almighty, created the prophets' hearts and bodies from the clay of 'Illin (the highest place). He created the hearts of believers from this clay, and created their bodies from clay other than this.

He created the bodies and hearts of unbelievers from sijjin. Then He mixed the two (kinds of) clay. Hence the unbeliever (woman) bears a believer; the believer (woman) bears an unbeliever. From

here the unbeliever may do a good deed. The hearts of believers and of unbelievers yearn for the clay from which they were created.

There are many traditions concerning that Allah, the Most High, created man from clay. Allah, the Exalted, said: "It is He who created you from clay." He, the Exalted, said: "And He began the creation of man from clay.

He created the prophets and believers from the most sacred clay, hence they saved and freed man. He created the unbelievers from the meanest and dirtiest clay, hence they hindered the progress and development of man's social life. Through His wisdom, Allah, the Most High, decreed to mix these two kinds of clay with each other, and they produced opposites.

The (wives of) the prophets and believers borne some wicked and unbelieving children. An example of is Noah, Allah's Prophet, whose wife gave birth to a son who deviated from the right path and disbelieved in his father's message. Allah drowned him along with the unbelievers. Noah felt pity for him and whispered to his Lord, and He, the Exalted, answered him:

"Surely he is not of your family; surely he is (the doer of) other than good deeds." (The wives of) the unbelievers may give birth to believing, righteous children. This is among the outcomes of the mixture of the two kinds of clay, as the Imam, peace be on him, said.

- Patience

The Imam, peace be on him, urged (the Muslims) to be patient. He said: "(The position of) patience in faith is like that of the head in the body, and he who has no patience has no faith.

The greatest thing which man uses as weapon against events and misfortunes is patience, entrusting affairs to Allah, the Most High, and pleasure with what He decrees, for this is the essence of faith.

❖ Some Morals of Believer

The Imam, peace be on him, spoke a bout the noble moral traits through which a believer is exalted. He said: "Some of a believer's morals are: He spends (on his family) according to (his) narrow provision, gives (them) generously according to (his) plentiful provision, treats men with justice, and is the first to greet them.

Some of a believer's morals are that he is economical(he does not spend when in narrow provision and spends generously when in plentiful one(treats men with justice even against himself, for this is a proof for his piety, and is the first to greet them, for this shows his good manners.

❖ Fanaticism

The Imam, peace be on him, was asked about fanaticism, which was among the manners of those who lived before Islam, and he replied: "The fanaticism through which one commits sin is that one regards the wicked from among his people as better than the good of other people. It is not an act of fanaticism that one loves his people, but it is an act of fanaticism is that one helps his people do wrong.

The Imam, peace be on him, has wonderfully defined foolish fanaticism through which one commits sin. It is that one considers the wicked and criminal from among his people better than the good and righteous, that he helps them do wrong and show aggression and enmity toward others. In this manner one denies the truth and destroys values. As for one's love for his people, it is not fanaticism.

❖ Guarding against Telling Lies

The Imam, peace be on him, warned his children against telling lies, and said to them: "Guard against telling lies, whether small or great, during seriousness or joking, for if one tells a lie about small things, he is ready to tell a lie about great ones. Did you not know that Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, say: 'As

long as the servant tells the truth, Allah writes him truthful, and as long as he tells lies, Allah writes him untruthful."

The Imam, peace be on him, warned (the Muslims) against telling lies about all things, for lying is among the ugliest and most detestable crime in the view of Allah. He also ordered them to tell the truth, for it is the source of all virtues which lead to honor and dignity.

❖ Certainty of Words

The Imam summoned his companions to be sure of their words and have knowledge of what they said, whether good or evil. He said: "One should not say good or evil words concerning another unless he has knowledge of him.

❖ Chastity

The Imam, peace be on him, urged his companions to be chaste, and regarded chastity as the best of all the acts of worship. He said: "The best act of worship is the chastity of stomach and private parts.

❖ Content

As for content, it is one of the excellent qualities. If man follows it, he will be free from worries. The Imam, peace be on him, said: "He who is content with Allah's apportionment is the richest of all the people.

Content is a treasure which never comes to an end. He who is satisfied with Allah's apportionment is the richest of all the people, the greatest of them in rest, and the least of them in worry.

❖ Some Qualities deliver the Believer

The Imam, peace be on him, mentioned some qualities which saved the believer. He said: "Three (qualities) deliver the believer: He should withhold his tongue from backbiting men, busy himself

with that which profit him in this world and the next, and weep very much over his sin.

Some of the Prophets' Norms and Wise Sayings

The Imam, peace be on him, told his companions about some of the prophets' norms, wise sayings, and affairs, that they might follow them and enlighten themselves with their behavior. The following is some of what has been handed down from him:

❖ Al-Khidr's Commandments to Musa

Al-Zuhri reported that Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, peace be on him, said: "At last al-Khidr commanded Musa, saying: 'Blame not any person for sin. The most beloved affairs with Allah, the Great and Almighty are three: moderation when rich, pardon when powerful, and gentleness toward Allah' servants. When one is kind to others in this world, Allah, the Great and Almighty, will be kind to him on the Day of Judgment. The head of wisdom is reverential fear of Allah.

How wonderful the meanings of this wisdom are! How wonderful its objectives are! It contains all the commandments which make man felicitous and sublime.

❖ Some of Allah's Revelations to Musa

The Imam, peace be on him, related to his companions some of Allah's revelations to His prophet Musa, peace be on him. He said: "Allah revealed to Musa: 'Make My creatures love me, and make me love my creatures.' Musa asked: 'O My Lord, how shall I do (this)?'

Allah replied: 'Remind them of My boons and favors, that they may love me. Repel not any fugitive from my gate or a straying one from my courtyard. This is better for you than a hundred year's worship, when one fasts by day and stands in prayer by night.' Musa asked: 'Who escapes from You?' Allah answered:

'The disobedient one.' Musa asked: 'Who is straying from Your courtyard?' Allah replied: 'It is he who is ignorant of the Imam of his time, absent from him after he has recognized him, and ignorant of the laws of his religion. Teach him the laws (of his religion), through which he worships his Lord and reaches His good pleasure.

In this tradition the Imam, peace be on him, urged those who summoned (men) to Allah to spare no effort to save them from the acts of disobedient to Allah, to make them beseech obeying Him, and not to repel them from this. He told them that their work in this way was the most beloved worship and act of obedience to Allah.

❖ A Wisdom in the Bible

The Imam, peace be on him, reported to his companions a brilliant wisdom from the Bible. He said: "It has been written in the Bible: 'Seek not the knowledge of what you do not do until you do what you come to know. If knowledge is not put into practice, it increases its possessor nothing except unbelief and remoteness from Allah."

The Imam, peace be on him, summoned (his companions) to put knowledge into effect. It is not an act of truth that man gets knowledge and does not put it into practice, for this increases him nothing save remoteness from Allah.

❖ Musa and a Worshipper

The Imam, peace be on him, related to his companions the story of Musa with a worshipper. He said: "Musa passed by a worshipper. The worshipper was raising his hands toward the heaven and supplicating Allah, the Most High. Musa spent seven days, and then he returned to the worshipper. He saw him raising his hands toward the heaven. Hence he said:

'O Lord, this is Your servant, who has raised his hands toward You and asked You for forgiveness for seven days, while You have not responded to him.' Allah revealed to Musa:

'O Musa, if he supplicates me until his hands fall down and his tongue is cut off, I will not respond to him, unless he comes to me through the gate which I have commanded him to."

As for this tradition, it summons man to turn his face toward Allah, and to seek nearness to Him through the doors which He has assigned.

❖ Musa with Allah

The Imam, peace be on him, said: "Musa bin 'Umran asked his Lord: 'Who are Your people whom You will shade with the shade of Your Throne on the day when there is no shade save Your shade?' Allah, the Glorified and Exalted, revealed to him:

'Those whose hearts are pure, and whose hands are covered with earth, who remember My majesty, are content with obeying Me as the little (baby) who is content with milk, go to My mosques (masajid) as birds go to their nests, and become as angry as the tiger when (men) make lawful what I have made unlawful.'

These people, who have faith in their lord, are the best of creatures in the purity of hearts, the soundness of minds and intentions. They turn their hearts and feelings toward Allah; they see nothing except Him, and believe in nothing save Him. Hence Allah will recompense them for this when he shades them with His shade, includes them in His gentleness, and single them out for His bounty.

❖ The Death of the Prophet

The Imam, peace be on him, narrated the death of his grandfather, Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, and the events which accompanied it. The text of his narration is as follows: Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, peace be on him, reported on the authority of his father Abi Ja'far, who said: "Two men from Quraysh came to my father 'Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on him, and he asked them: 'Shall I tell you about Allah's Messenger?'

'Yes,' they replied. He said: [I heard my father saying:] 'Gabriel came down to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, three days before his death, and said to him:

'O Ahmed, Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, has sent me to you in (showing) preference and specialty toward you. He is asking you about what He knows better than you:

'How do you find yourself?' 'I find it grieved, O Gabriel!' replied Allah's Messenger. On the third day, Gabriel, the Angel of Death, and seventy thousand angels came down (to the Prophet). Gabriel was ahead of them and said:

'O Mohammed, Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, has sent me to you in (showing) honor, preference and specialty toward you. He is asking you about what He knows better than you: 'How do you find yourself?' 'I find it grieved, O Gabriel!' replied Allah's Messenger.

"At the door the Angel of Death asked for permission, hence Gabriel said: 'O Ahmed, the Angel of Death is asking you for permission. He had never asked any person for permission before you, and will never ask anyone for permission after you.' The Prophet said:

'Give him permission.' Gabriel permitted the Angel of Death, and he walked toward the Prophet, stopped before him, and said to him: 'O Ahmed, Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, has sent me to you, and commanded me to obey you in what you command me.

If you command me to seize your soul, I will do. If you hate this, I will leave.' The Prophet asked: 'Will you do this, O Angel of Death?' 'Yes,' answered the Angel of Death, 'I have been commanded to obey you.' Hence Gabriel said:

'O Ahmed, Allah has yearned for meeting you.' The Prophet said: 'O Angel of Death, carry out (Allah's) command.' 'O Ahmed, this is the last time for me to come down to the earth,' answered Gabriel, 'You were my objective in this world.'

"When the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, passed away, a consoler came to his family. They heard his words, but did not see his person. He said to them: 'Peace, Allah's mercy and blessings be on you, every soul shall taste of death, and you shall only be paid fully your reward on the Day of Resurrection.

Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, is comfort against every affliction, and replacement of perishable things. Hence, trust Allah, hope for Him! The one suffering an affliction is he who is deprived from reward, peace, Allah's mercy and blessings be on you.' Ja'far said: [My father said: Ali said: 'Do you know who is this? This is al-Khidr."

❖ Friendship toward Ahl al-Bayt

The Imam, peace be on him, emphasized the necessity of showing friendship toward the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. He regarded this friendship as one of the elements of Islam. He, peace be on him, asked Abu` Hamza al-Thumali: "Which place is the best?"

Abu` Hamza was perplexed, not knowing what to answer, hence he said: "Allah and His Messenger better know."

Then the Imam, peace be on him, answered: "The best place is that which is between the corner of the Ka`ba and the standing place of Ibrahim. Noah lived among his people for 950 years. If a man lived as long as Noah did, fasted by day, stood in prayer by night in this place, and met Allah without showing friendship toward us, he would not avail himself of these things."

In this connection many authentic traditions have been handed down from the Greatest Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, and his trustees (of authority), peace be on them. They indicate that showing friendship toward the Imam s is an Islamic obligation about which the Muslim will be questioned on the Day of Resurrection. Some scholars think that showing friendship to them is one of the conditions of a correct act , not of its acceptance. It is not one of the conditions of the correctness of the obligations.

Anyhow, in another tradition, the Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned the plentiful reward which those who love the ahl al-Bayt attain in this world and the next.

Some Shi'ites visited the Imam and asked him: "How are you, son of Allah's Apostle?"

The Imam answered them with gentleness:"I am well. I praise Allah for this. What about you all?" "We love you, the ahl al-Bayt."

He gave them good news of that Allah would plentifully repay them, saying:

"He who loves us for the sake of Allah, Allah will make him enter a very shady place on the day when there is no shade except His shade. He who loves us for reward, Allah will cause him enter the garden. He who love us for this world, Allah will provides him from where he thinks not.

❖ The Prophet's and 'Ali's Rights against the Muslims

the Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned the great rights of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, and of his trustee (to authority), the gate of the city of his knowledge, Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, against this community.

He, peace be on him, said: "Though parents' have great rights against their children because of their kindness to them, the kindness of Mohammed, may Allah bless him and his family, and of 'Ali to this community is greater, hence they are worthy of being its two fathers."

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, and his trustee (of authority) have rights against this community greater than those of parents against their children, for they have freed the will of this community, saved it from bondage and the darkness of ignorance, and granted it a free, noble life.

Unfortunately, this community did not show gratitude toward them for their favors. Rather it removed the pure family (of the Prophet) from the offices of government and leadership. Besides its ruler intentionally destroyed this family at the Battle of Karbala`'. Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, peace be on him:

"Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, was kind to Quraysh, the Arabs, and non-Arabs. Who was kinder than him (to them)? Yet they were ingratitude to him. Besides they are ingratitude to us, the ahl al-Bayt.

❖ The Mastership of the Ahl al-Bayt over Men

A man asked the Imam, peace be on him: "What is the excellence which has made you the masters of the people?"

The Imam replied: "Know that all the people are one of three: Either a man became a Muslim through us, hence he is our friend. His friendship belongs to us, therefore we are his master, or a man whom we fought against and killed, hence he went to the Fire and his property has remained as booty for us, or a man from whom we have taken poll tax, and he is lowly. There is no fourth (man). Therefore, which merit and honor have we not won?"

I (the author) think that the Imam mentioned the tradition for a man who did not confess the outstanding merits of the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them, nor did he believe in their absolute mastership over this community.

It is worth mentioning that the ahl al-Bayt have countless outstanding merits and talents. It is sufficient for them that Allah took away uncleanliness from them and purified them thoroughly, made it incumbent on the community to show friendship toward them, that the Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, united them with the Firm Revelation (the Quran), appointed them as ships of deliverance and security for mankind.

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Short, wonderful and Wise Sayings

As for the short, wise sayings of the Imam, they represent creation, the development of thought, and the originality of opinion. They show the summary of the experiences the Imam got during his lifetime. They are not confined to a certain side of life; rather they include all its sides. The wise Imam carefully and inclusively considered all the affairs of man and gave decisive solution to them. The following is some of his outstanding, wise sayings:

1. He whose soul is noble, the world is easy for him.

2. All good is in man's safeguarding his soul (against sins).

3. I never like the believer who is well in the world, in his soul, and in his property, while no affliction befalls him.

4. He who has no clement one to guide him gets straying, and he who has no impudent one to help him gets lowly.

5. Woe unto him whose units surpass his tens." Hisham b. Salim asked Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, about the meaning of this tradition, and he replied: "Have you not heard that Allah, the Great and Almighty, saying:

'Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it, and whoever brings an evil deed, he shall be recompensed only with the like of it.' If he does a good deed, ten good deeds shall be written for him, and if he does one evil deed, one evil deed shall be written for him. We seek refuge in Allah from him who does ten evil deeds on one day, and does no good deed, hence his evil deeds surpass his good deeds."

6. The enemies take the properties of the ignoble one, and that which is evil produces nothing but evil. The ignoble withhold from spending their properties on the poor and the needy. Hence Allah, the Exalted, empowers their enemies over them to enjoy their properties and to deprive them of them.

7. If the body does not become ill, it becomes ungrateful, there is no good in the body which become ungrateful. If man always enjoys good health, and diseases do not attack him, he shows ingratitude (toward Allah's favors), and there is no good in such a body.

8. You should return the things deposited with you (to their owners). By Him who sent Mohammed a prophet with the truth, if the killer of my father al-Husayn deposited with me the sword with which he killed him, I would return it to him.

9. The best worker in Allah's eyes is he who puts the Prophet's sunna into practice.

10. He who is the first to thank you enslaves you through affection.

11. The friend is not a friend unless he cuts off a piece of his religion for his believing brother, and patches it with asking Allah to forgive him. The honest friendship in Islam depends on affection and brotherhood for the sake of Allah. Among its necessities, according to this tradition, is that the friend asks Allah to forgive his friend.

12. I assure (you) before my Lord that he who begs without neediness will someday begs out of neediness.

13. Beware of that for which you apologize.

14. Allah, Great be His Majesty, says: 'By My might, My tremendousness, My beauty, My radiance, My exaltedness, and the loftiness of My place, if a servant prefers My desire to his desire, I will make him take care of his life in the next world, his riches in his heart, protect him from loss, make the heavens and the earth guarantee his provision, and make the world come to him.

15. There may be one conceited and fascinated (by the world). He rises in the morning for playing, laughing, eating, and drinking. He does not know that he may expose himself to Allah's displeasure through which he shall be burnt in the Fire.

16. Glory be to Him who has made gratitude toward His favors praise; glory be to Him who has made confessing incapability of thanking Him thanksgiving.

17. Seeking needs from men degrades life, takes away modesty and respect, and is the present poverty.

18. He who admonishes time, his admonition lengthens.

19. If one is free from need to men, men will be in need of him.

20. The noble one rejoices at his excellence, and the ignoble one boasts of his possessions.

21. Feel shame before Allah because of your nearness to Him.

22. Show not enmity toward anyone, though you think that he will harm you.

23. Abstain not from making friends with anyone, though you think that he will not profit you, for you know not when you will hope for your friend.

24. He who relies on the best which Allah chooses never desires other than the state He chooses for him.

25. You must accept the apology of those who apologize to you, even though you know that they are liars.

26. The defects of men should be few on your tongue.

27. Seek help against speech through silence, for speech has harmful states.

28. He who accuses men of what they have, they will accuse him of what he does not have.

29. The best beginning of affairs is truthfulness, and their best end is faithfulness.

30. To bear witness that there is no god save Allah is the nature (fitra).

31. Performing the obligatory prayers is the creed.

32. To obey Allah is preservation.

33. The believer does not perish out of three qualities: Bearing witness that there is no god but Allah, the Alone, who has no associate; His ample mercy, and the intercession of Mohammed, may Allah bless him and his family.

34. If you affect toil for men, you are the most seducing of them.

35. I wonder at him who protects himself from harmful foods, but does not protect himself from harmful sins.

36. When you perform the prayers, perform the prayers of one who bids farewell (to this world).

37. Everything has fruit, and the fruit of hearing is good words.

38. Insistence is accompanied by ignorance.

39. Humbleness is the means to exaltedness.

40. All of you will become story, hence he who is able to be a good (story), let him do (this).

41. The envier attains no honor, and the malicious one dies of grief.

42. Losing the beloved is loneliness.

43. Satisfaction with the detested things caused be (Allah's) decree is the highest degree of certainty.

44. It is an act of worship that the believer looks at the face of his believing brother for love and affection.

45. If the two merchants are truthful and kind (to men), (Allah) will bless (their work). If they are untruthful and disloyal (to men), (Allah) will not bless (their work).

46. It was said to the Imam, peace be on him: [Al-Hasan al-Basri said:] "I do not wonder at him who perishes and how he perishes; rather I wonder at him who escapes danger." The Imam replied: "I do not wonder at him who escapes danger and how he escapes danger; rather I wonder at him who perishes and how he perishes, while Allah's mercy embraces (all things).

47. If the servant is sincere to Allah in secret, Allah shows him his evil works, and he busies himself with his own sins and (leaves) men's defects.

48. If the servant becomes angry, he draws himself nearer to Allah's wrath.

49. The pack-animal has six rights against its owner: He should give fodder to it when he dismounts it. He should lead it to water when he passes by it. He should not lash it but in right. He should not load it more than its ability. He should make it walk freely. He should not ride it at the time between two times of milking.

50. When you are powerful over your enemy, then regard pardon as thanksgiving for power over him, for pardon out of power is a kind of generosity.

51. Beware of making friends with the disobedient (to Allah), and helping the unjust.

52. The Imam, peace be on him, was asked about the most important person, and he replied: "It is he who does not regard the world as important for him.

53. The lawful provision is the nourishment of the chosen.

54. Men have taken three (qualities) from three (persons): They have taken patience from Ayyub (Job), thanksgiving from Nuh (Noah), and envy from the children of Ya'qub (Jacob).

55. You have no right to say whatever you like, for Allah, the Exalted, says: And follow not what you have no knowledge of. You have no right to listen to whatever you like, for Allah, the Great and Almighty, says: Surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that.

56. I admire the man who is clement during his anger.

57. A man said to the Imam: "O Son of Allah's Messenger, I love you very much for the sake of Allah." Hence he, peace be on him, said: "O Allah, I seek refuge in you from that I love (men) for Your sake, while You detest me."

58. The act (that results) from Allah-fearingness is not little. How can be little that which is accepted?"

59. If the people of the heavens and the earth came together to describe Allah's mightiness, they would not be able to.

60. Courage is undertaking war, patience toward affliction, and defending brothers.

61. He, peace be on him, said: "The eloquent make no use of words during bad listening.

62. Man should moderately spend (his money), and give the surpass (to the poor) for the sake of his life in the next world. This safeguards his blessing, brings him nearer to Allah (the Exalted), and makes his final result useful.

63. Beware of wronging him who finds no helper against you except Allah.

64. How bad is the brother (friend) who takes care of you when rich and abandons you when poor!

65. Know the affection (toward you) in your brother's heart through the affection toward him in your heart.

66. He whose concern is the next world, Allah spares him the concern of this world.

67. The generous are the masters of men in this world, and the Allah-fearing will be their masters in the next.

68. If Allah, the Great and Almighty, sent down a book in order to chastise a man, I would expect that the man was I, or in order to have mercy on a man, I would hope that the man was I, or in order to chastise me certainly, I would increase (myself) nothing but diligence, lest I should return my soul with blame.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Imam al-Baqir

Imam al-Baqir (a.s.)

(676 AD – 733 AD)

Imam Muhammad ibn ‘Alī al-Baqir was born on the 1st of the month of Rajab, 57th Hijra (676 AD) in the city of Medina. Imam al-Baqir was the Fifth Imām to the Shī‘ah Muslims. His father was the previous Imām, ‘Alī ibn Husayn, and his mother was Fatimah bint al-Hasan. He was the first Imam whose lineage ascended and reached the Islamic prophet Muhammad both from the paternal and maternal sides. In the year 114 Hijri (733 AD) he was poisoned by the Umayyad authorities and died in the holy city of Madinah.

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.), because of the resemblance that he had with his great-grandfather, was named Muhammad, and because of it that he analyzed the knowledge and made manifest its secrets he became known with the title of al-Baqir. The word “Baqir” is a derivate of the word 'Baqara' which means to open up or to expand. Imam Mohammad al-Baqir (a.s.) was named as such since he introduced and spread the knowledge and teachings of various dimensions and implemented the knowledge streams in a manner which had never been seen earlier. It is narrated that Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) said that Imam Mohammad al-Baqir (a.s.) will introduce, spread and open up knowledge just like the ground is opened up for cultivation.

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) is highly respected by Sunni Muslims for his religious knowledge and Islamic scholarship. He has disclosed the secrets of knowledge and wisdom and unfolded the principles of spiritual and religious guidance. Nobody can deny his exalted character, his God-given knowledge, his divinely-gifted wisdom and his obligation and gratitude towards spreading of knowledge. He devoted himself to knowledge, and raised its standard, founded its bases, and fixed firmly its sources.

Thus, he was the pioneer, teacher, and leader of the Islamic community during its cultural movement. He led it to wide steps in scientific studies and played an important role in prospering the bright Islamic civilization throughout the generations that came after him. Then he established his religious school that was full of main jurists, theologians, muhaddethin (narrators), mufasserin (exegesits), and scientists.

Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) managed to collect the teachings and reforms of the Holy Prophet and his Ahlul-Bayt in the form of books. His pupils compiled books on different branches of science and arts under his instructions and guidance. In the excellence of his personal purity and godly traits, the Imam al-Baqir was a model of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and his great grandfather, Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.). His admonitions created a spiritual sensation among the Muslims in general.

In what follows, some selected sermons and wise maxims are given of the Imam al-Baqir’s teaching with regard to the area of moral conducts and ethical values.

Imam al-Baqir's Commandments to his followers

It is incumbent on those who adopt the doctrine of the members of the House (Ahlul Bayt), peace be on them, to follow these immortal commandments. They should put into effect their bright items to be an example to people. This is the text of his commandments:

"O People of our Shias, listen and understand our commandments and our covenant to our followers. Be truthful in your talk. Fulfill your oath to your friends and your enemies. Help each other with your properties. Love each other with your hearts. Give alms to your poor. Come together in your affairs.

Do not cheat nor betray anyone. Do not have doubts after certitude. Do not escape out of cowardice after intrepidity. Do not turn away from the people whom you love. Your desire should not be for the love of other than you; nor should your love be for other than you; nor should your act be for other than your Lord; nor should your faith and purpose be for other than your Prophet (s).

Ask for the help of Allah, be patient. Indeed the earth belongs to Allah. He gives it to His servants whom He wants. And the final result is for the pious.

He, peace be on him, added: Indeed, our Shias, the friends of Allah and the friends of His Apostle, are those who tell the truth when they speak. They fulfill (the promise) when they promise. They pay (the deposit) when they are deposited. They endure with justice when they are forced to endure. They give when they are asked for

the obligation. And do justice when they are asked (to do it). Our Shias are those whose ears do not pass over their knowledge.

Our Shias are those who do not praise those who find fault with us, nor do they make friends with those who hate us, nor do they associate with those who betray us. When our Shias meet a believer, they honor him. When they meet an ignorant person, they leave him. Our Shias are those who do not growl as the dog does, nor are they greedy as the crow is, nor do they ask anyone (for alms) except their brothers even if they die of hunger. Our Shias are those who believe in our doctrine, separate themselves from their beloved ones for us, approach the strangers who love us, and turn away from the strangers who hate us.

One of those who were sitting with the Imam admired these words concerning the Shias. Thus, he asked the Imam: Where are such as these (people)? The Imam replied: They are in the ends of the lands. It is they whose livelihood is easy, who are delighted. When they are present, no one knows them.

When they are away, no one misses them. When they become ill, no one visits them. When they propose (marriage), no one marries them. When they enter a way, they do not deviate from (it). When the ignorant ones address them, they say: peace. And they pass the night prostrating themselves before their Lord and standing.

One of those who were sitting with the Imam blamed the Shias who were contemporary to the Imam, saying:

"Oh son of Allah's Apostle, what about those who follow you with their tongues while their hearts are contrary to that?"

Thus, the Imam replied: The tribulation will bring about droughts against them to destroy them utterly, spites to ruin them completely, and disunion to kill them. By Him Who supported us at the hands of His angels, no one except Allah will kill them at their hands. Therefore, cleave to acknowledgment when you speak (to people). Leave quarreling, for it divides you. Beware, He (Allah) will raise you from the dead before the fixed time.

They will win immortal Paradise. They will sit with the close angels, and accompany the prophets. No servant is more honorable with Allah than the servant who is rendered homeless for Allah till he meets Allah. Such are our Shias who are the warners in the earth. They are lamps, signs, and light for those who seek what they seek. They are the leaders of the people of obedience to Allah. They bear witness against those who oppose their summons. They are tranquility for those who come to them. They are kind to those who follow them. They are generous, forgiving, and merciful. So, such are their attributes in the Torah, the Bible, and the Holy Qur'an.

The learned man is from our Shias when he keeps his tongue, obeys his leaders, shows enmity towards his enemies with his heart, knows their defects, does not show them what is in his heart, looks at their bad deeds with his own eye, and hears their offenses with his own ear. Those who hate his enemies are his friends. And those who love his enemies are his enemies.

So, one of those who were present asked the Imam: "May my father and mother be ransom for you, what is the reward of the one whom you have described when he walks peacefully, gets up peacefully, and spends the night protected? What is his rank and his reward?

Thus, the Imam, peace be on him, said: "The sky commanded him to be protected, the Earth commanded him to be honored, and the Light commanded him to be believed.

So, it was said to the Imam: What is his attribute in the world? He, peace be on him, replied: "When he is asked (for alms), he gives. When he is invited, he accepts. When he seeks (something), he obtains (it). And when he supports an oppressed person, he strengthens him.

I think that no commandments were reported on the authority of the Imams of the pious such these commandments that raise man to the level of the righteous and the pious. For they summon man to cleave to high moral standards and to refrain from bad manners.

If Muslims put them into effect, they would be the lords of nations and leaders of people.

Indeed these commandments are among the treasures of Islam. They contain the aspects and essence of Islam. They denote that Islam has good, mercy, and guidance for all people. So, the Moslem must follow them throughout his life.

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The Early Shias

Imam Abu Jafar (Muhammad al-Baqir), peace be on him, praised the foremost Shias. He mentioned their high moral standards and their high good qualities. He, peace be on him, said:

Our friends and Shias were the best of their period. The Imam of the mosque in the district was from among them. The caller to prayers (muazzin) in the direction to the Kaaba (Qibla) was from among them. The possessor of the deposit was from among them. The possessor of the trust was from among them. The religious scholar whom the people asked about their religious affairs was from among them.

These commandments show the qualities of the early Shias, such as asceticism, piety, religious devotion, and cleaving to the religion. So, the people trusted them. They prayed behind them. Moreover, they regarded them as custodians over their properties and religion. Generally speaking, the early Shias were famous for piety and righteousness.

It was reported that a Shia stood before the judge as a witness. However, the judge refused to accept the Shia's testimony, for he belonged to the Rafida. So, the Shia burst into tears. Thus, the judge was astonished at him. He thought that the Shia wept for his refused testimony. He asked him about that. So, the Shias replied:

"You have deviated from the truth. You have ascribed me to this sect. No one joins it except the prophets and the righteous."

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The Attributes of the Shias (the followers)

In many of his traditions, Imam Abu Ja'far (Muhamma al-Ba`qir), peace be on him, mentioned the high qualities which those who believe in the doctrine of the members of the House (AhlulBayt), peace be on them, should follow. The following are some of the traditions reported on his authority:

1. He, peace be on him, said: "Our Shias fear Allah and obey Him. They are humble and pious. They pay the trust. They praise Allah very much. They perform the prayers and the fasting. They obey the parents. They take care of the poor neighbors, the needy, the debtors, and the orphans. They are truthful in talking. They recite the Koran. They hold back their tongues from (speaking against) people except good. Thus, they are the custodians of their tribes over all things.

No one has such qualities except the righteous and the pious who fear Allah, and are afraid of His punishment.

2. He, peace be on him, said: "The Shias of Ali, peace be on him, sacrifice their lives for our authority. They love each other, for they love us. They visit each other to enliven our affair. When they become angry, they do not do wrong. When they are pleased, they do not go too far (in pleasure). They are a blessing for him who is their neighbor them. And they are peace for him who associates with them.

The Shias who have such qualities are blessing and mercy for those who are their neighbor. They are a safety and a peace for those who associate with them. For they do nothing except good for all people.

3. He, peace be on him, spoke to Abu al-Muqdam about the high moral standards of the Shias of Imam Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be on him. He, peace be on him, said: "O Abu al-Muqdam, the Shias of Ali are pale, thin, and withered. Their lips are faded, their abdomens are slim, their colors are changeable, and

their faces are yellow. When it becomes dark, they use the ground as a bed and receive the earth with their foreheads. Their prostration is much, their tears are many, their supplications are many, and their weeping is plentiful. The people become happy and they become sad."

These are the attributes of the Shias of whom were 'Ammar b. Yasir, Abu Dharr, Hijr b. 'Adi, Maytham al-Tammar, and the like.

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Al-Baqir's Commandments to Shias

Imam Abu Ja'far (Muhammad al-Ba`qir), peace be on him, supplied Shias with excellent commandments and valuable teachings. The following are some of them:

Ja`bir b. Yazid al-Ju'fi reported. He said: "We went in a group to Abu Ja'far, peace be on him. We ended our ritual prayers. Before we saw him off, we had said to him: 'O Son of Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, command us.'

He peace be on him, said: "Your strong one should help your weak one. Your rich one should be kind to your poor one. The man should be loyal to his brother as he is loyal to himself. Keep our secrets. Do not force the people to follow us. Consider carefully our affair and what has been mentioned on our authority. If you find it in agreement with the Koran, then put it into effect. If you find it contrary to the Koran, then leave it. If you doubt the affair, then stop and ask us to explain it to you."

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir, peace be on him, commanded the Shias to cling to high moral standards. He guided them to what reformed their life in this life and the hereafter. He also commanded them to compare the traditions reported on the authority of the Imams with the Koran. So, they were able to put into effect the traditions that were in harmony with the Koran.

Meanwhile, they were able to leave the traditions that were contrary to the Holy Koran. He ordered them to do that because

many traditions were fabricated. Those who were indifferent to religion fabricated these traditions to defame the members of the House (AhlulBayt), peace be on them, and to distort their precepts.

B. He, peace be on him, said: "Cling to piety, hard work, and truthful talk. Pay the trust to him who trusts you, whether he is righteous or a sinner. If the murderer of Ali b. Abi Talib gave a trust to me, I would pay the trust to him."

Are there commandments higher and nobler than these valuable commandments that lead man to good behavior among people?

C. He, peace be on him, sent one of his companions to some of his Shias, and ordered him to tell them the following: He, peace be on him, said: "Recite my greetings to my Shias. Order them to fear Allah, the Great. Their rich one should visit their poor one. Their sound one should visit their ill one. Their living one should attend the funeral of their dead one. They should meet each other in their houses. Indeed their meeting each other enlivens our affair.

May Allah have mercy on the one who enlivens our affair and puts into effect the best of it. Say to them: We will suffice nothing for them with Allah except through the good deed. They will not obtain our intercession but through piety and hard work. Indeed the most intense of all people in regret on the Day of Judgment is the one who describes a certain deed, and then he does other than it."

Al-Baqir, peace be on him, advised Shias to do all kinds of good, to support each other, and to refrain from discord and division.

D. He, peace be on him, said: "May Allah have mercy on the servant who makes people love us, and does not make them hate us. By Allah, if they report what we say on our authority - if they do not distort it nor do they change it against us according to their opinions, no one will comment on it.

However, the one of them who hears the word, and then he adds ten (words) to it and explains it according to his own opinion. Therefore, may Allah have mercy on the servant who hears some

of our hidden secret, and then he buries it in his heart. By Allah, Allah will not bring together our followers and our enemies in one house."

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The Sublime Preachings of Imam al-Baqir (a.s.)

Imam Abu` Ja'far (al-Ba`qir), peace be on him, preached to his companions as the prophets preached to their communities. He warned them from the deception and delusions of the world. He enlightened them on the attack of time and the disasters of days. He summoned them to think deeply about what they would come to when they would leave the world for the dark graves and the lonely narrow spaces within the graves, where nothing would avail them except their good deeds. The following are some of his preaching:

1. He, peace be on him, said: "O People, you are targets in this world. Deaths compete with each other for you. No one of you receives a new day of his lifetime but through ending another day of his appointed time. Which meal has no lump (in the throat)? Which drink has no lump (in the throat)? Set right what you will go to with what you will depart from. As for today, it is booty. As for tomorrow, you do not know to whom it belongs. The people of the world are traveling. They will untie their baggage in (a place) other than it. Origins have left us. We are their branches. So, what is the survival of the branch after its origin?

Where are those whose lifetimes were longer than yours, and whose desires were farther than yours? O Son of Adam, what you cannot repel, has come to you. What does not come back, has left you. So, do not number the livelihood that goes away as livelihood. You have nothing of it except the pleasure that approaches you to your death and brings you nearer to your appointed time. So, you look like the missing lover and torn blackness. So, take care of your own soul. Leave other than it. Ask Allah for help, and He will help you.

2. Some of his Shi'ites came to him. He preached to them and warned them from the punishment of Allah. However, they paid no attention to his preaching. That displeased him. So, he bowed his head for a while, and then he raised it. He admonished them and preached to them again, saying:

Surely, if part of this speech of mine came into the heart of one of you, he would be dead. Indeed you are ghosts without souls and flies without a lamp. You look like big pieces of wood clad with garments, and mutinous idols. Do you not take gold from stone? Do you not take light from the brightest light?

Do you not take pearls from the sea? Take the good word from him who says it even if he does not put it into effect. That is because Allah says: 'Those who listen to the word, then follow the best of it; those are they whom Allah has guided (al-Zumar, 18).

O Conceited one, woe unto you! Would you not praise Him Whom you gives something perishable and He gives you something remaining? (Give) one perishable dirham for ten dirhams to a hundred fold from the All-Generous (Allah). Allah has given you a reward from Him. It is He Who feeds you, waters you, clothes you, heals you, suffices you, and protects you from those who frighten you. Who protects you by day and night, fulfills your urgent need, and tests you according to reason?

It seems that you have forgotten the nights of your aches and fear. You asked Him, and He responded to you. So, He is worthy of gratefulness for His favor. However, you have forgotten Him concerning him whom He has mentioned. Woe unto you! You are a thief from among the thieves of sins. You hasten to desires and commit sins. You do that through your ignorance. It seems that your not under the oversight of Allah. Or it seems that Allah does not watch you.

O Seeker of the garden, how long your sleep is! How weak your walking is! How weak your intention is! By Allah, you are invoked and wanted. O You who escape from the Fire, how quick your walking to it! How fast you are in earning that which will throw you into it!

"Look at those lines of graves by the yards of the houses. They (the dead) are near in their lines and their graves. However, they are far in their meeting. They lived long, and then they were ruined. They associated (with people), and then they were forced to dwell deserted places. They were tranquil, and then they were disturbed. They were hopeless, and then they passed away. Therefore, no one is near and far, far and near, living and ruined, sociable and lonely, tranquil and disturbed, inhabitant and departed, except the people of the graves.

O Son of the three days, (I mean) your day when you were born. Your day when you will come down into your grave. And your day when you will come out (of your grave to meet) your Lord. How important this day will be! O Possessors of the admirable appearance and of thirst-quenching and kneeling camels, why do I see your bodies sound and your hearts ruined? By Allah, if you saw what you would meet and what you would come to, you would say: 'Would that we were sent back, and we would not reject the communications of our Lord and we would be of the believers (al-An'am 6, 27).

Allah, the Great and Almighty, said: 'And if they were sent back, they would certainly go back to that which they are forbidden, and most surely they are liars (al-An'am 6, 28).

Imam Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him, blamed these people when they turned away from his preaching and directions. He wanted to set right their behavior. He wanted them to follow righteousness to gain good here and in the hereafter. He gave them these effective preaching to make them obey Allah. For Allah is able to do good for them and to deprive them of that.

He preached to them with these lessons to which souls submit, and of which hearts are afraid.

3. Imam al-Baqir, peace be on him, preached to one of his companions. He informed him of the reality of this life. He, peace be on him, said to him: "Regard the world as a house where you live, and then you leave the house. Or regard (it) as perfection you obtain in your sleep. When you wake, you find nothing of it. Indeed

if man thinks about the world through this correct opinion, he will be free from conceit, selfishness, greediness, and other psychological diseases that deviate him from the right path.

4. Among his preaching is this: "If the eye is bathed in tears, Allah will protect its owner from the Fire. If the tear flows down the cheek, neither miserliness nor abasement will befall its owner. There is a punishment for everything except the tear. For Allah, the Most High, forgives the seas of sins through it.

Imam al-Baqir, peace be on him, summoned Moslems to weep out of fear of Allah. Weeping is among the signs of faith. It shows the relationship between the servant and his Lord and Creator.

5. Imam al-Baqir, peace be on him, said: "Man should mention death very much. If he mentions death very much, he will refrain from the world. Surely, if man mentions death, he will renounce the world and refrains from its vanities and pleasures.

6. Imam Abu` Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, was asked about the most ascetic of all the people. So, he, peace be on him, replied: "It is he who pays no attention to the world."Then he was asked: "Who is the most hopeless of all the people?""It is he who sells the remaining (life) for the transitory (life),"he replied. Then he was asked: "Who is the most important of all the people?" "It is he who thinks that the world is not important," he answered.

7. He, peace be on him, preached to his companions, saying: "Allah, the Exalted, says: 'O Son of Adam, I have done you three favors: I have concealed what your family does not know. For, if they knew it, they would not take care of you. I have given to you generously. Now, I ask you for a loan, but you have offered no good. I have had mercy on you in the third one, but you have offered no good. These are some examples of the Imam 's valuable preaching. He, peace be on him, reported them to cure and educate souls. This educational phenomenon is among the most prominent values in the teachings of the Imam s of the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them.

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The Virtue of Reason

Imam Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him, talked about the virtue of reason. He denoted that it was the greatest of all things which Allah, the Exalted, created. He, peace be on him, said:

When Allah created reason, He tested it. Then He ordered it to come forward and it came forward. Then He ordered it to go back and it went back. Then Allah said: 'I swear by My power and majesty that no creation of Mine is dearer to Me than you are, and I have made you perfect in those whom I love. Lo! To you are My orders and prohibitions. And for you are My rewards and retributions reserved.

Surely, through reason, the value of man becomes high. Were it not for reason, there would be no difference between man and the animal. Reason is among the fundamental conditions necessary for performing the religious duties, as the jurists say.

Cleverness

Imam Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him, praised cleverness. He regarded it as the only source of man's happiness and righteousness. He, peace be on him, said:

"The goodness of all coexistence and living together is a full measure. Two thirds of the measure are cleverness. And one third of it is heedlessness.

Nothing has a portion of good and righteousness except cleverness. That is because man feigns inattention to the things which he realizes and knows.

How wonderful this maxim is! A religious scholar commented on it, saying: "Indeed, it has gathered together all the righteousness of the affairs of the world.

Contemplation

Imam Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him, summoned Moslems to think things over. He, peace be on him, said: "Through thinking (things) over, the fruitful opinion is concluded. This word is among the wonderful maxims. Man can come to a correct genuine opinion through considering things carefully. He can conclude scientific facts and inventions through contemplating things. It is impossible for him to come to that without contemplation.

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Noble Manners

Imam Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him, took care of spreading high moral standards among people. For they are necessary for building a Moslem society. Tradition books are full of his wise words. The following are some of them:

1. Kindness

As for kindness to people, it plays an important role in strengthening social ties and spreading love and friendship among people. Islam has urged Moslems to cling to kindness to people. Imam Abu` Ja'far (al-Ba`qir), peace be on him, said: "Continuous kindness is the best means with me. The most lovable things with the Imam, peace be on him, was continuing kindness to people, for he wanted to plant love and affection in their hearts through it.

2. Fairness

In many of his traditions, Imam Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him, urged Moslems to treat people with fairness. Among what he said is the following:

A. He, peace be on him, said: "Indeed, Allah singles out people from among His creatures for fairness. He makes them love fairness. He makes them love fair acts. Then He orders the seekers of fairness to go to them. Then He makes it easy for them to do fairness, as He makes it easy for rain (to come down) to the arid

land to enliven it and its people. Allah singles out people from among His creatures to be enemies of fairness. He makes them hate fairness. And He them hate fair acts. He prevents the seekers of fairness from going to them, as He prevents rain from (coming down) to the arid land to ruin it and its people. And what Allah forgives is more (than this).

B. He, peace be on him, said: "Fair acts prevent evil deaths (from happening). Every fair act is alms. The people of fairness here are the people of fairness in the hereafter. The people of the abominable acts here are the people of the abominable acts in the hereafter. The people of the fair acts will be the first to enter the garden. The people of the abominable acts will be the first to enter the Fire.

3. Kindness should be Equivalent to Fairness

Imam Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him, ordered his companions to repay fairness with much more kindness. He, peace be on him, said: "Whoever does a favor like that which is done for him returns like for like. Whoever doubles the favor is grateful. Whoever thanks (people for their favors) is generous. He who knows that what he does is for his own interest should not find people slow in their gratefulness (for him), nor should he ask them for more love (for him). So, do not ask other than you to thank you for what you do for your own interest, and through which you protect your honor. Know that the one who asks you for a need does not honor himself when he asks you (for a need). So, honor yourself through fulfilling his need.

When the Imam, peace be on him, had ordered his companions to return like for like, he summoned them to do kindness for kindness. He ordered them not to ask people for a reward. For they did that for their own interests and honor.

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Rules of Conduct

Imam Abu` Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, urged his companions to treat people according to the rules of social conduct.

Among these rules are the following:

1. Cheerfulness

He, peace be on him, asked his companions to meet people with cheerfulness and good words. He, peace be on him, said: "Good words and cheerfulness lead to love and nearness to Allah. Bad words and frowning lead to hate and remoteness from Allah.

2. Treating people kindly

He, peace be on him, urged his companions to treat people kindly. He, peace be on him, said: "Say to people the best (words) which you want them to say to you. For Allah hates the one who curses and abuses and defames the believers. He detests the one who uses an obscene language and insists on begging. He loves the one who is modest, clement, chaste.

Muslim's Rights

He, peace be on him, denoted the rights which Islam legislated for the Moslem towards his Moslem brother. He, peace be on him, said: "Love your Moslem brother. Love for him what you love for yourself. Hate for him what you hate for yourself. When you are in need of (a certain thing), then ask him for that. When he asks you for (a certain need), then give (it) to him. If you spare no good for him, he will spare no good for you. If you help him, he will help you. If he is absent, then keep him during his absence. If he is present, then visit him, and respect him. For he is from you, and you are from him. If he admonishes you, then do not leave him till his hate comes to an end. If good befalls him, then thank Allah for that. If a tribulation afflicts him, then help him.

If Moslems put into effect these excellent teachings, they will be the strongest of all the peoples of the world, and nations will not

invade them, enslave them, and plunder their wealth. However, they have deviated from these true teachings, so they have become weak humble parties. "Each party is happy with that which it has.

Fulfilling the Moslem's Need

Imam Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him, summoned the Moslems to fulfill the needs of their Moslem brothers. He warned them from leaving them. He, peace be on him, said: "If the servant refrains from helping his Moslem brother and does not strive to fulfill his need, he will be afflicted by the need causing a sin not a reward. If the servants refrains from spending on that which pleases Allah, then he will be afflicted by spending a hundred fold on that which displeases Allah.

Relations with Womb Relatives

Islam takes care of the relations with womb relatives. It summons Moslems to cling to them, for they strengthen the family and lead the community to fruitful results. Imam Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him, urged the Moslems to cleave to them. He, peace be on him, said: "Relations with blood relatives increase acts, develop properties, repel the tribulation, make easy the reckoning, and postpone the a fixed term (of death).

Alms

Imam Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him, underlined alms. He mentioned the advantages which the one who gives alms obtains. He mentioned that before his companions. He, peace be on him, said: "Shall I tell you about the thing that drives away the ruler and the Satan from you?

Yes, tell us to do it, "replied Abu` Hamza. He, peace be on him, said: "Give alms early in the morning. For it blackens the Satan's face and breaks the greediness of the oppressive ruler on that days of yours. Love each other for Allah. Help each other with the good deeds. For such deeds put end to the Satan and the oppressive

ruler. Insist on asking Allah for forgiveness, for such insistence erases sins.

Pity for the Orphan

Imam Abu` Ja'far (al-Ba`qir), peace be on him, urged the Moslems to feel pity for the orphan and to have affection for the weak. He, peace be on him, said: "Whoever has four (qualities), Allah will build a house for him in the garden. The one who shelters the orphan, has mercy on the weak, feel compassion for his parents, and treats his slave gently.

Good Qualities

Imam Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him, talked about the good qualities that draw the servant nearer to Allah and make him far from His wrath and punishment. He, peace be on him, said: "Whoever has four (qualities), his Islam is perfect, is helped with his faith, his sins are erased, and meets Allah, the Great and Almighty, while He is pleased with him. If he has sins from his head to his feet, Allah forgives him his sins.

They are: Loyalty to Allah, the truthfulness of the tongue with the people, shame of the ugly (things) with Allah and people, and good manners towards the family and people. The believer who has four (qualities), Allah, the Exalted, will make him live in the rooms on the rooms in the most high gardens. It is he who shelters the orphan, has mercy on him, and is like the father for him. It is he who has mercy on the weak, helps them, and suffices them. It is he who spends on his parents, treats them gently, and pleases them. And it is he who helps and suffices his slave.

The Imam, peace be on him, ordered man to do all things that drew him nearer to his Lord. He guided him to the good deeds which Allah loved, for which He rewarded him very much, and for which He did him many favors.

Silence

The Imam, peace be on him, summoned the Moslems to cling to silence. He ordered them to refrain from saying useless words. He, peace be on him, said: "Indeed, this tongue is the key of all good and evil. So, the believer must seal his tongue as he seals his gold and silver. For Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, said: 'May Allah have mercy of the believer who restrains his tongue from all evil. For that is alms from him for himself. No one is safe from sins unless he restrains his tongue.

Bad Qualities and Deeds

The Imam, peace be on him, warned the Moslems from having bad qualities and abominable deeds. The following are some of the traditions reported on his authority:

1. He, peace be on him, said: "If some haughtiness enters the person's heart, some of his reason decreases. He, peace be on him, said: "The haughty one quarrels with Allah about His gown. Indeed, haughtiness results from ignorance and the decrease of reason. If man knows that he will be a mass of mean earth after death, he shows no haughtiness towards Allah's creatures.

2. The Imam, peace be on him, dispraised the hypocrite person, who is double-faced and double-tongued. He, peace be on him, said: "Bad is the servant who is double-faced and double-tongued. He flatters his brother when he is present. He backbites him when he is absent. He envies him brother when he is given. He betrays him when he is afflicted by a tribulation.

These qualities denotes that such a person has an evil soul, that he has no morals, and that he has no faith in his Lord.

3. The Imam, peace be on him, warned the Moslems from having the following qualities. He, peace be on him, said: "Bad is captivity after victory, depression after the misfortune, rudeness with the poor, cruelty with the neighbor, miserliness towards the relative, disagreement with the friend, misbehavior towards the family, impudence through the power, greediness during poverty,

backbiting the friend, telling lies, the slander, perfidy from the ruler, the rage from the generous. Whoever asks more than his right is worth of deprivation. Setting right the one who does not know dignity is through disgracing him. The careful one rises (in rank). The cautious one finds (good). Whoever refrains from these qualities is endowed with high moral standards and is among the unique people.

4. The Imam, peace be on him, prevented the Moslems from practicing the following qualities. He, peace be on him, said: "The owner of three traits will not die till he sees their evil results: oppression, cutting off ties of relations, and binding oath through which he fights with Allah. Indeed the quickest obedience in reward is the relations with womb relatives. Perhaps some people are sinners. However, they visit each other. So, their properties increase and they become rich. Binding oath and cutting off ties of relations leave houses empty of their people.

5. The Imam, peace be on him, hated the people who were endowed with the following traits. He, peace be on him, said: "Four (traits) lead to the quickest punishment: The person whom you treat with kindness but he mistreats you. The person who you do not oppress but oppresses you. The person to whom you are loyal but he betrays you. The person who visits his relations but they end their relationship with him.

6. The Imam, peace be on him, prevented the Moslems from drinking wine. For it is among the mortal sins. He, peace be on him, said: "Indeed the one who is alcoholic is like the one who worships the idol. Wine makes him shake, and destroys his manhood. It makes him violate the prohibitions such as shedding blood and committing fornication.

Surely, wine is the source of all sins and offenses. It is among the social catastrophes that defame man and leads him to commit all the prohibitions. As for its bodily damages, we have talked about them in one of our books.

7. The Imam, peace be on him, dispraised the person who used obscene language. He, peace be on him, said: "Surely, Allah detests the one who uses obscene language.

Backbiting and Slander

The Imam, peace be on him, made a distinction between backbiting and slander. He, peace be on him, said: "It is an act of backbiting to say concerning your brother what Allah conceals for him. As for the manifest traits of him such as fury and hastiness, there is no harm in mentioning them. As for slander, it is that you say concerning your brother what he has not.

Anger and its Remedy

The Imam, peace be on him, warned the Moslems from anger. He provided a remedy for it. He, peace be on him, said : "Indeed this anger is an ember from Satan. The ember is burnt in the heart of the son of Adam (i. e. man). When one of you becomes angry, his eyes become red and his jugular veins become swollen. Thus, Satan enters him. When he becomes angry, he must sit on the ground. With that he removes the cunning of Satan.

Imam Abu` Ja'far (al-Ba`qir), peace be on him, underlined the affair of anger. He warned the Moslems of its final results. Imam al-Sa`diq, peace be on him, said: "My father said: 'There is nothing more intense than anger. Perhaps the person becomes angry. So, he kills the soul which Allah has forbidden and defames the chaste woman. Imam Abu` Ja'far, peace be on him, said: "The person sometimes becomes angry and continues his anger till he enters the Fire.

Vanity

The Imam, peace be on him, said: "I wonder at the one who is vain and boastful. He was created from a sperm. Then he becomes carrion. Between this and that, he does not know what will be done for him.

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Wonderful Maxims of Imam al-Baqir (a.s.)

Short wonderful maxims were reported on the authority of Imam Abu` Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him. They are full of noble morals and are useful. The following maxims are some of them.

1. "If you can deal with anyone and do him a favor, do that."

2. "Flatter the hypocrite with your tongue. Make your love sincere to the believer. When a Jew associates with you, associate well with him.

3. "Nothing is mixed with a thing better than (mixing) clemency with knowledge.

4. "Assume the truth. Leave that which does not concern you. Avoid your enemy. Be careful of your friends except the trusty one who fears Allah. Do not make friends with the sinner. Do not inform him of your secrets. Ask the advice of those who fear Allah.

5. "The friendship of twenty years is kinship.

6. "The decree of Allah is good for the believer.

7. "He for whom Allah does not make a preacher from his own self, the preaching of people do not avail him."

8. "He whose outward (deeds) are heavier than his inward (deeds), his scales are light.

9. "How many a person meets a person and says to him: may Allah ruin your enemy, and he has no enemy except Allah.

10. "He who disobeys Allah does not recognize Him." Then the Imam composed: Do you disobey the Lord and show your love (for Him)? By your life, this is an innovation among deeds. If your love was truthful, you would obey him. Indeed the lover obeys him whom he loves.

11. "The need with the one who has recently gotten property is like the dirham in the mouth of the snake. You need him, and you are in danger.

12. "Know the love in the heart of your brother through what he has in your heart.

13. "Faith is love and hatred."

14. "Four (acts) are among the treasures of kindness: Concealing the need, concealing the alms, concealing the pain, and concealing, the misfortune.

15. "He whose tongue is truthful, his acts grow. He whose intention is good, his daily-bread increases. He whose kindness to his family is good, Allah prolongs his life.

16. "Whoever gets a brother in Allah in addition to faith in Allah and faithfulness to his brotherhood seeking Allah's pleasure gets a ray from Allah's light, safety from the punishment of Allah, a pilgrimage (to Mecca) through which he will be successful on the Day of Judgment, everlasting honor, and increasing reputation. That is because the believer is neither mawsool nor mafsool from Allah, the Great and Almighty."

He was asked: "What is the meaning of mawsool and mafsool?"He, peace be on him, replied: "Mawsool meaning the believer is not connected to (Allah). Mafsool meaning the believer is not separated from (Allah).

17. "It is sufficient cheat for the person is that he sees from the people the vague affair of his own soul. Or he finds faults with other than him through what he cannot leave. Or he hurts his friend through that which does not concern him.

18. "Humbleness is that you should be satisfied with the humble sitting-place, that you should greet whomever you meet, and that you should leave the dispute even if you are right."

19. "The believer is the brother of the believer. So, he should not abuse him nor should he deprive him (of his rights) nor should he doubt him."

20. "He to whom clumsiness is apportioned, faith is veiled from him.

21. "Indeed Allah has punishments in the hearts, the bodies, the daily-bread, and the worship. However, the cruelty of the heart is the most intense punishment.

22. "On the Judgment Day, a caller will call: 'Where are al-Sabirun (the patient)?' So, a group of people will rise. Then a caller will call: 'Where are al-Mutasabbirun?' Thus, a group of people will rise."He was asked: "Who are al-Sabirun and al-Mutasabbirun?" He, peace be on him, replied: "Al-Sabirun are those who are patient with performing the religious duties. Al-Mutasabbirun are those who are patient with the prohibitions.

23. "Allah says: 'O Son of Adam, refrain from what I have prohibited, so you are the most pious of all people.'

24. "The best worship is the abstinence of the private parts and the abdomen.

25. "Modesty and faith are coupled with each other. If one of them goes away, the other will follow it.

26. "Allah gives this world to both the righteous and the sinners. However, He gives this religion to His close friends only.

27. "Allah gives the world to those whom He loves and those whom He detests. However, He gives religion to those whom He loves only.

28. "If the beggar knew what was in begging, he would never beg anyone. If the begged one knew was in prevention, he would never prevent anybody.

29. "Some blessed rich servants belong to Allah. They associate with people. People live under their wing. Some wicked servants belong to Allah. They do not associate with people. People do not live under their protection. They are like grass -hoppers.

30. "Allah likes spreading greetings.

31. "Everything has a catastrophe. The catastrophe of knowledge is forgetfulness.

32. "O Allah, help with the world through riches, and with the hereafter through piety.

33. "The person increases in opinion when he gives sincere advice.

34. "The weapon of the ignoble person is ugly words. A poet composed this wonderful maxim, saying: Al-Baqir al-Murtada, the descendant of the Imam, peace be on him, was truthful when he said: "Ugly words are the weapon of the ignoble.

35. "Thunderbolt strikes the believer and the unbelievers. However, it does not strike the person who praises (Allah).

36. "The best deeds are three: Praising Allah in all conditions, treating people with justice, and giving the friend money.

37. "Regard the good deed as small. Do it quickly, and conceal it.

38. "In the Sunna (the Prophet's practices) and the religion, it is not an act of truthfulness to turn away from the generous.

39. "How wonderful good deeds are after evil deeds! How shameful evil deeds are after good deeds!

40. "The person may earn money through four (sources). They are unfaithful act, usury, treason, and theft. Such money is not accepted in four (acts). They are zakat, alms, pilgrimage (to Mecca), and Umra.

41. "Allah, the Great and Almighty, refuses to accept the pilgrimage and Umra performed through ill-gotten gains.

42. "He whose outward (deeds) are heavier than his inward (deeds), his balance is light.

43. "Lying destroys faith.

44. "I had a companion. The companion regarded the world as small. Thus, I regarded him as great.

45. He, peace be on him, said to his companions: "Do you enter your hands in the bags of your companions and take what you want?" "No," they replied. "You are not our companions as you say," he, peace be on him, explained.

46. "Kindness may make the father go to extremes. This is the worst father. Negligence may make the child disobey (his parents). Such a child is the worst.

47. "Preach to your companions, and respect them. Do not attack each other.

48. "Sins make misfortunes strike the servant.

49. "Allah decreed that He would not take the blessing He bestowed on the servant. However, when the servant commits a sin, he is worthy of the adversity.

50. "If there is no love in my heart for the saints of Allah and no hatred for His enemies, nothing will avail me, even if I fast throughout the day, pray throughout the night, and spend all my money for Allah.

51. Zarara asked Imam Abu Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him: "What is the meaning of al-Hanafiya?" He, peace be on him, replied: "It is the nature Allah has created in men. He has created it in them to make them recognize Him.

52. Imam Abu` Ja'far was asked: "Is there a thing better than gold?"He, peace be on him, answered: "Yes, the one who gives it.

53. "The tribulation of the people against us is burdensome. When we ask them (to follow us), they do not respond to us. When we leave them, they do not follow other than us.

54. "The chasteness of the abdomen and private parts is the best (quality) through which Allah is worshipped.

55. "Be patient towards misfortunes. Do not transgress (Allah's) rights. Do not give the person a thing that harms you more than it avails you.

56. "Our followers obey Allah.

57. "The friend may take care of you when you are rich, and abandon you when you are poor. How bad such a friend is!

58. "Kindness to friends is the best help in the world.

59. "Whomever is given ethics and kindness is given good and rest. Besides His state is good here and the hereafter. Whomever is deprived of them, that will be a way to evil and tribulations, except him whom Allah protects.

60. "Allah (sometimes) makes a person recognize the truth. So, the person can remain on the top of a mountain. He can eat from the plants of the earth till death comes to him. Still, he faces no problem.

61. "The people of the garden will enter the garden through their deeds. Will Allah release (some people) from the Fire?" "Surely, Allah will release (some people) from the Fire," he replied.

62. "He who has no precautionary dissimulation has no good.

63. "If you want to know that you have good, consider carefully your heart. Does your heart love obedience to Allah? Does it detest the disobedience to Him? If it is so, you have good and Allah loves

you. Does it detest the obedience to Allah? Does it love the disobedience to Him? If it is so, you have no good and Allah detests you. The person is with his lover.

64. "Among the steps of Satan are the oath for divorce, the vow for sins, and the swearing by other than Allah, the Exalted.

65. "When the abdomen is full, (the person) becomes tyrannical.

66. "Allah detests the full abdomen.

67. "Whoever seeks the world to be chaste with the people, to maintain his family, and to help his neighbor, will meet Allah, the Great and Almighty, and his face will be like the full moon.

68. "Our talk is difficult. It is difficult (for people) to understand it. No one bears it except a close angel or a prophet or a servant whose heart Allah has tested for faith.

69. "I hate the person whose words are more than his knowledge. I also hate the person whose knowledge is more than his reason.

70. Use kind words with the hypocrite, love the faithful believer sincerely, and regard your association with (even) the Jew who sits with you.

71. No mixture is better than the mixture of clemency and knowledge.

72. The whole perfection is the knowledgeability of the religious affairs, steadfastness against misfortunes, and moderation in living.

73. By Allah (I swear), the arrogant in trying to dishonor Allah.

74. Imam al-Baqir (a.s.), one day, asked the attendants, "What is personality?" Each of them provided his own opinion. Afterwards, the Holy Imam (a.s.) said: Personality is to avoid greed so as not to be humble, avoid begging so as not to be disgraced, avoid niggardliness so as not to be insulted, and avoid ignorance so as not to be opposed. "Who can do all these?" wondered they.

He (a.s.) answered: He who wants to be like him who looks into the pupil of the eye, the musk in an odor, and enjoys the same standing of a present caliph -king- will be able to do so.

75. Before Imam al-Baqir (a.s.), a man said: O Allah, make us do without people." The Imam instructed: Do not say such a statement; you should say: O Allah, make us do without the evil ones. A faithful believer cannot do without his brother.

76. Do the right and seclude from whatever does not concern you. Avoid your enemy. Beware of your friend except the honest ones who fear Allah. Never accompany the sinful and never show him your secrets. Seek the consult of those who fear Allah.

77. A twenty-year friendship is kinship.

78. You would better deal with no one except him whom you did a favor.

79. Three manners are the charities of this world and the world to come: They are to pardon him who oppressed you, regard him who ruptured his relations with you, and possess yourself when one's ignorance inflicts you.

80. Oppression is of three sorts: a sort Allah will not forgive, another Allah will forgive, and a third Allah will not overlook it. Regarding the first one, it is polytheism. The second is the secret oppression of oneself. The third is the servants' oppressing each other.

81. The servant (of Allah) who abstains from supporting his brother and exerting efforts for settling his need will suffer from exerting efforts for settling a need that causes him to commit a sin and deprives him of the reward. The servant who abstains from spending alms in a field that pleases the Lord will spend many folds of those alms in a field that displeases Allah.

82. All of Allah's acts are good for the faithful believer.

83. Allah dislikes people who beg each other importunately, but he loves it for Himself. Hence, Allah the Glorified likes people to beg Him and ask for what He has in possession.

84. People's admonitions will not benefit him whom Allah does not make him learn lessons of admonition from his own self.

85. The scale of him whose outer appearance is more preferable than his conscience is weightless.

86. It happens that you address to a man, 'May Allah fling your enemy,' while that man's only enemy is Allah.

87. Three categories of people should not say Salaam: They are those who are in their ways for offering the (congregational) Friday Prayer, those who walk in a funeral, and those who sit in a public bathroom.

88. A scholar whose knowledge is advantageous (for people) is better than seventy thousand worshippers.

89. A servant will not be scholar before he gets rid of envying those who precede him and belittling those who are less than him in (grade) of knowledge.

90. He who disobeys Allah does not know Him. He (a.s.) then recited these two poetic lines: You disobey the Lord and show his love. This is surely strange deed. If your love is sincere, you will obey Him. Certainly, the lover obeys the Beloved.

91. The need for him who has newly been wealthy is like a dirham in a snake's mouth; you need it but you fear the snake.

92. The bearers of three ill characters will not die before they suffer the consequence of such characters: they are oppression, disregard of the relatives, and perjury against Allah. The reward of the regard of the relatives is the most hastened. Even the sinful people will be enriched and wealthy when they regard each other (by means of good mutual relations). Perjury and disregard of the relatives change countries into deserted wastelands.

93. Deeds without knowledge are not accepted. Knowledge is valueless unless it is matched to deeds. Knowledge guides its bearers to act (good deeds). The deeds of the unknowing persons are worthless.

94. Allah has appointed a group of His creatures for doing favors. He made them love favors and love practicing them. He also guided the seekers of favor to seek it from them, and facilitated doing favors for them in the same way as He made the rainfall drop on the barren lands to enliven its people as well as them.

He also has appointed a group of His creatures for opposing the favors. He made them hate favors and hate practices them. He banned the seekers of favor from reaching them and banned them from doing favors in the same way as He bans rainfall from reaching the barren lands in order to kill its people and them. However, Allah overlooks very much.

95. You can realize the love that your brother bears for you through the love that you bear for him.

96. Faith is love and hatred.

97. Our adherents -Shia- are only those who fear and obey Allah. Their signs are modesty, piety, fulfillment of the trusts, very much reference to Allah, fasting, offering prayers, piety to (their) parents, aiding the neighbors especially the poor, the destitute, the indebted, and the orphans, truth, reciting the Qur'an, and avoiding mentioning people except for praising. In addition, they are the most trustful of the people of their tribes.

98. Four characters are within the treasures of charity: They are the concealment of neediness, secret Alms-giving, suppression of pains, and containment of misfortunes.

99. The deeds of the truthful are chaste. The provisions of the well-intended ones are increasable. The ages of those who are benevolent to their wives are addable.

100. Beware of laziness. and tedium. They are the keys to every evil. The lazy will not fulfill the rights (that are incumbent upon them) and the tedious will not submit to the right.

101. For those who establish good relations with somebody for the sake of Allah and their friendship is depended upon believing in Allah and being loyal to their friends -all in the cause of seeking Allah's satisfaction, they will obtain a glimmer of the illumination of Allah, security from His punishment, an argument that makes them happy on the Day of Resurrection, an enduring honor, and a growing praise.

The faithful believer is neither connected nor detached to Allah the Exalted." As he was asked about an explanations, Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) said: 'Connected' means that the faithful believer is not a part of (the essence of) Allah, and "detached" means that he is not a part of another thing."

102. It is quite sufficient self-cheating for a man to notice people's flaws that he himself enjoys, vilify someone for a defect that he himself cannot abandon, or hurt his associates by intruding in matters that do not concern him.

103. Modesty is to accept to sit in a place other than the first row of a session, to greet whomever you meet, and to avoid disputation even if you are right.

104. The (faithful) believers are brothers of each other. They should not insult, deprive, or mistrust each other.

105. Imam Al-Baqir (a.s.) said to his son: Submit the right, for he whoever refrains from giving something in its right way will give its two-folds in a wrong way.

106. Faith will be screened from him who is given idiocy.

107. Certainly, Allah bates the speaker of obscene language.

108. Allah punishes physically and mentally, such as harsh livelihood and incapability of worshipping. However, no punishment is harsher than hard-heartedness.

109. On the Day of Resurrection, an angel will shout, 'Where are the tolerant ones?' Few people will stand up. Then, he will shout, 'Where are the withholders?' Few people will stand up (The reporter of this narration):

"What are the tolerant and what are the withholders?' I asked. The Imam (a.s.) answered: the tolerant ones are those who put up with performing the obligatory rituals. The withholders are those who withhold themselves from committing the prohibited matters.

110. Allah says: O son of Adam, if you avoid what I have made unlawful, you will be the most pious of people.

111. The best adoration is the chastity of the belly and the genitals.

112. Good-humouredness and bright-facedness achieve the others' affection and approach to Allah. Bad-humouredness and gloomy-facedness achieve the others' hatred and take away from Allah.

113. I will surely attach my favor with another so that the latter will keep the previous. To prevent from doing new favors is to cut off the thanks for the previous ones. My prestige has never allowed me to ignore settling the fresh needs.

114. Prudence and faith are knotted in one bind; whenever one (of them) goes, the other will follow.

115. This world is given for the good and the evil, while Allah dedicates this religion to certain people.

116. Faith is declaration and act. Islam is declaration without act. Faith is the concern of the heart. Islam is the laws of marriage, legacy, and stopping bloodshed. Faith is a part of Islam while Islam is not necessarily a part of faith.

117. Those who teach a field of knowledge will be rewarded with the same gifts of those who act upon it without any shortage in their rewards. In the same way, those who lead to a theme of deviation will undergo the same penalties that the followers of such a theme will undergo without any lack of their penalties.

118. Flattering and envy are not within the faithful believers' traits unless they are used for the sake of seeking studies.

119. Only the scholars are permitted to say, 'Allah is the most knowledgeable,' when they cannot answer a question. According to another narrative: Only the scholars are permitted to say, "I do not know,' when they cannot answer a question so that the asker will not doubt.

120. The first man whose tongue spoke the Arabic was Ishmael (a.s.) -the prophet- son of Abraham (a.s.) - the prophet. He was thirteen year old. Before so, he had spoken the language of his father and brother.

121. May I tell you of the thing that will take the unjust rulers and the Shaitan away from you if you do it? Abu-Hamza said: Yes, you may, so that we will apply it (to out conducts)." The Imam (a.s.) said: It is the alms-giving. Give alms as early as possible. Alms-giving blacken the Shaitan's face and stops the unjust ruler's resentment against you on that day. Cling to cherishing each other for the sake of Allah and helping each other in fields of charity. This will cut off the unjust ruler and the Shaitan. Persist on seeking Allah's forgiveness because it erases the sins.

122. The tongue is surely the key to every good and evil. You should seal your tongues as you seal your money.

The Prophet (pbuh) said: May Allah's mercy be upon the faithful believer who withholds his tongue from saying any evil saying. This will be the like of giving alms to himself." No one will be saved from committing sins before he seals his tongue.

123. It is a sort of backbiting to mention your brother's defects that Allah has concealed. It is not problematic to mention his explicit

flaws, such as nervousness, hastiness, and the like. Falsehood is to accuse your brother of a character that he does not have.

124. He who describes the right course for people while he takes the other will be the most regretful on the Day of resurrection.

125. Abide by piety, diligence, honesty, and fulfillment of the trusts of the charitable as well as the sinful. If the killer of Ali-bin-Abi Talib (a.s.) deposits with me a trust, I will surely keep it for him.

126. The regard of the relatives purifies the deeds, increases the fortune, refutes the catastrophes, makes the judgment easy, and postpones the death.

127. O people! You are targets of the death in this world. You will not receive a new day of the age unless after the expiry of another (that takes you near death). Which meal is empty of choking? Which drink is empty of throttling Reform that which you are going to face by means of that which you are leaving behind. Today is profit while the owner of tomorrow is unknown. People of this world are travelers who open their luggage in other world. The principals that we are their branches fade away. How will the branches remain after their principals? Where are those whose ages were longer than ours and hopes were greater than ours? Surely will come to you, son of Adam, that which you will not be able to challenge, and were away from you that which you will not be able to regain.

Never regard the incomplete living every pleasure of which approaches you to death and draws you near your expiry. You will soon be the missed beloved and the soulless body. Hence, you should take care of yourself only and leave whatever does not mean you. Seek Allah's help and He will help you.

128. He who does the like of what was done to him is rewarding properly. He who doubles the favor is regarded as thankful, and he who thanks is regarded as generous. He who realizes that the favors that he has done were, first of all, for his good will not expect people's gratitude and will not anticipate their affection to him.

Do not expect that the others will thank what you have done for yourself to protect your prestige. You should know that he who asks you for a favor has not honored his face against asking you; therefore, you should honor your face against rejecting him.

129. Allah arranges hardships for the faithful servant like the traveler who arranges presents for his people. Likewise, He protects him against the worldly temptations like physicians who protect their patients.

130. Allah gives this worldly pleasures to whom He likes and whom He dislikes equally; but He gives the religion to whom He likes only.

131. The Shias - adherents - of Imam Ali (a.s.) are surely those who meet the needs of each other for the sake of (their loyalty to) our leadership, love each other for the sake of our cherishment, and exchange visits for the sake of proclaiming our affairs. They do not oppress when they are enraged and do not exaggerate when they are pleased. They are blessing for their neighbors and peace for their associates.

132. Laziness injures both the worldly and the religious affairs.

133. Had the beggars realized the reality of beggary, they would not have begged for anything. Had those who do not settle others' needs known the reality of their deed, they would have settled every need.

134. Within the servants of Allah, there are the blessed who live simply and people live in their neighborhood. They are like rainfall for Allah's servants. On the other hand, there are the accursed and inauspicious ones who neither live peacefully nor let people live peacefully. They are like locust for Allah's servants. They ruin everything they meet.

135. Receive people with the best things with which you like to be received. Allah surely hates him who damns very much, vilifies, reviles at the faithful believers, speaks and spreads obscene language, and insists on beggary. Allah likes the chaste, and the seeker of chastity.

136. Allah surely likes exchanging Salaams.

137. The one who goes to an oppressor and tyrant ruler and instructs him to acquire piety and scares him and admonishes preaches, and exhorts him he would have a reward similar and equivalent to both weighty beings the mankind and the Jinn and the similar (quantity) of their good deeds.

138. The person who loves for the sake of Allah and detests and despises for the sake of Allah and give for the sake of Allah is among those whose faith has achieved completion.

193. Indeed, faithful is the one who, when pleased and glad his pleasure does not make him enter into sin and falsehood (he does not commit any sin while happy). And when unhappy and angry his anger does not oust him from the word of righteousness. (He does not abandon the right course) And when he gains powers his power does not make him commit excess and oppression and make him go for a thing upon which he does not have any right.

140. There is no servant except that there exists a white spot upon his heart. so when he commits a sin a black spot arises into that white spot. So when he repents this black spot moves away.

And if he continues on committing sins the blackness of this spot increases till such time it overwhelms and over rides the whiteness. When the whiteness is covered over (by the blackness) the owner of it (heart) does never at all return to wards beneficence and goodness.

And this is what Allah means when he says:

"Nay! rather, what they used to do has become like a rust upon their hearts.

141. Indeed, when a man earns the wealth from Haram (prohibited) sources, no Hajj and no Umrah and no strengthening of his blood kinship is never at all accepted and approved (by Almighty God).

142. The completion, entire completion of a man lies in understanding and appreciating the religion (the necessary laws of and principles of jurisprudence), the patience and forbearance upon the occurrence of incidents and the appraisement and assessment of (his) economy.

143. There are three things out of the completions and worth and values of the world and thereafter:

- Forgiving the one who has committed excess and aggression against you.
- Joining the own who cuts off relations and ties with you.
- Forbearance and tolerance for the one who committed a folly and showed insane behavior and conduct towards you.

144. The scholar whose knowledge is made use of and benefited from, is worthier and more virtuous than seventy thousand worshippers and adorers.

145. Beware! caution! Do not acquire enmity because it rotten and turns the heart evil and causes to develop hypocrisy.

146. Indeed, the most terrifically sorry of all the people on the resurrection day will be the servant who defines and shows the way of justice to the people and himself opposes it.

147. Whosever's tongue utters the truth, his practice becomes purified and the one whose intention is decent and good, his sustenance boosts up and increases. And who ever adopts a decent and nice attitude and behavior with his family his life be lengthens.

148. Nobody remains safe from sin unless he guards his tongue.

149. Consider the world as an abode where in you have dropped down for an hour and then you have got to leave it and go ahead or (suppose it) like the wealth which you lay hands upon in the dream and get overjoyed and glad. Then you wake up to find yourself empty handed.

150. Three things are back breaking:

a. A person who considers his practice as exorbitant. b. A person who forgets his sins. c. person who is pleased with his opinion and view (considering it superior).

151. The one whose appearance and apparent looks are better than his interior condition his scale of practice is light (weightless).

152. Heaven is surrounded by unpleasantness and patience. So, the one who remains patient over it's, unpleasantness in the world, enters the paradise. And the hell is surrounded by pleasure and lusts. So the one who allows (gives) himself it's pleasure and lustful desire enters the hell fire.

153. If people come to know what (evil) lies in begging, No one will beg from the other and if the one who is begged from knows the evil of rejecting the one who begs, nobody will turn down anyone's request.

154. He who repents of his sins is as the one who has not any (burden of) sin.

155. Try to learn knowledge because learning it is a good action and study is itself a worship.

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The Maxims of the Prophets Quoted by Imam al-Baqir (a.s.)

Imam Abu Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, talked very much about the lives and maxims of the prophets. The specialists in these subjects have reported many traditions on his authority. The following are some of them:

1. Part of Allah's Revelation to Adam

The Imam, peace be on him, told his companions about the maxims and high moral standards Allah revealed to Adam. He, peace be on him said: "Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, revealed to Adam: 'I will gather all good for you in four words: one of them is for Me; one is for you; one is between Me and you; one is between

you and people. As for the one that is for Me, it is that you should worship Me, and that you should not be a polytheist.

As for the one that is for you, it is that I reward you for your act at the time when you are in need of the reward. As for the one that is between Me and you, is that you should pray to Me, and I shall answer you.

As for the one that is between you and people, it is that you should satisfy people with what you satisfy yourself.

2. Solomon's Maxim

Al-Baqir, peace be on him, told his companions about the wonderful maxim of Solomon, son of David. He, peace be on him, said: "Solomon, son of David, said: 'We have been given what has been given to people and what has not been given to them. We have been taught what has been taught to people and what has not been taught to them.

However, we have found nothing better than fearing Allah during absence and presence, economizing during riches and poverty, the word of truth during pleasure and anger, and supplicating to Allah, the Great and Almighty in all circumstances.

This maxim has gathered good traits. For it summons people to fear Allah, to economize their daily bread. It prevents them from wasting their property. Moreover, it summons them to say the truth, to prefer it to all things, and to rely on Allah, the Most High, in whose hand is the fate of people.

3. A Maxim in the Torah

Al-Baqir, peace be on him, told his companions about a maxim in the Torah. He, peace be on him, said: "It has been written in the Torah:

'O Moses, I have created you, chosen you, strengthened you, commanded you to obey Me, and forbidden you from disobeying

Me. If you obey Me, I will help you to obey Me. If you disobey, I will not help you to disobey Me.

O Moses, My favor against you is that you should obey Me. My proof is against you when you disobey Me.

4. Why was Noah called the Grateful Servant?

Mohammed b. Moslem reported on the authority of Abu` Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, who said: "Noah was called the grateful servant because he said during morning and evening:

'O Allah, the blessing and health in religion and the world are from You. You are unique, there is no partner with You. I praise and thank You for them till You be pleased (with me).

5. Noah's Prayer against his People

Sudayr asked Imam Abu` Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, about Noah's supplication against his people. He asked: "Do you know why Noah invoked Allah against his people when he said: 'My Lord, leave not upon the land any dweller from among the unbelievers.

For sure if You leave them, they will lead astray Your servants, and will not beget any, but immoral, ungrateful (children)' Did he have knowledge of them?

The Imam, peace be on him, replied: "Allah revealed to him that no one of his people would believe (in Allah) except those who had believed (in Him) before. So, Noah recited this prayer against them.

6. Ismael was the first to speak Arabic

Imam Abu` Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, told his companions that Ismael, Allah's Prophet, was the first to speak Arabic. He, peace be on him, said: "Ismael was the first to speak Arabic. He was ten years old.

7. Allah whispered (words) to Moses

Imam al-Baqir, peace be on him, related to his companions that Allah, the Most High, whispered (words) to Moses. He, peace be on him, said: "It has been written in the Torah that Allah, the Great and Almighty, whispered (words) to Moses, son of Imran:

'O Moses, fear Me during your secret affairs, I will conceal your defects. Praise Me during your lonesomeness and your delightful pleasures, I will remind you during your heedlessness. Restrain your anger from those over whom I have made you king, I will restrain my anger from you. Conceal my hidden secrets in your heart. Humor with My enemy and your enemy from among My creatures. Do not make them curse Me when you manifest My hidden secrets. So, you make My enemy and your enemy take part in cursing Me.

8. Al-Baqir denied that the Prophet was Illiterate

Ali b. Asbat reported. He said: "I said to Abu` Ja'far: 'The people claim that the Prophet could neither read nor write.' So, he, peace be on him, denied that and said: 'How will that be?

Allah, the Exalted, said: 'It is He (Allah) Who raised among the illiterates an Apostle from among themselves, who recites to them His communications and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom, although they were before certainly in clear error.' How did he teach them the Book and the Wisdom while he could neither read nor write?

Then 'Ali b. Asbat asked the Imam : "Why was he called al-Nabi al-Ummi?

The Imam replied: "Because he was ascribed to Mecca. That is according to the words of Allah, the Great and Almighty: 'That you may warn Umm al-Qura and those around her.' Umm al-Qura means Mecca. So, he was called Ummi.

9. Noah and Iblis

Imam Abu` Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, reported that a conversation took place between Allah's Prophet, Noah, peace be

on him, and Iblis. That was when Noah invoked Allah against his people. The conversation is as follows:

Iblis: O Noah, you have done me a favor. Now, I want to reward you for it.

Noah: By Allah, I hate to do you a favor. What is it?

Iblis: Yes. You had invoked Allah against your people, so He had drowned them. Thus, no one has remained for me to delude him. I am at rest till Allah creates another generation. Then, I will delude them.

Noah: What is the reward?

Iblis: Mention me during three situations. For I am very close to the servant during them. Mention me when you become angry. Mention me when you judge between two persons. And mention me when you are with a woman and there is no one with you.

Indeed, Iblis comes to man during these three situations. It is these situations that make man commit sins and disobey Allah. May Allah protect us from these evil situations.

10. The Death of Solomon

Imam Abu` Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, narrated to Abu Basir the death of Allah's Prophet, Solomon. He, peace be on him, said: "Solomon, son of David, commanded the jinn (unseen creatures) to build a glass dome for him. He was leaning on his staff and watching the jinn's work. He happened to turn around.

Suddenly, he saw a man in the dome. He asked the man: "Who are you?""It is who does not accept bribes nor fear the kings. I am the angel of death," replied the man. Then, the Angel of Death made Solomon die. Solomon was still leaning on his rod in the dome. The jinn went on working and looking at him.

Then Allah, the Great and Almighty, commanded the wood worm to eat Solomon's rod. 'When he fell down, the jinn came to know

plainly that if they had known the unseen, they would not have tarried in abasing torment.

11. Jacob's meeting with Joseph

Imam Abu` Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, reported a story about Jacob's meeting with Joseph. He, peace be on him, said: "Jacob said to his sons: 'On this day of yours, you and all your family should go to Joseph.' Jacob and Joseph's aunt, the mother of Yamin, were with them.

Then, they headed for Egypt with happiness. It took them nine days to get there. When they met Joseph in the King's house, Joseph embraced his father, kissed him, and wept. Then, he seated his father and his aunt on the king's throne.

Then, he entered his room. He darkened the eyelids with kohl, perfumed himself, wore the royal uniform, and went out. When they saw him, they bowed down for him. Then, they thanked Allah for that.

Throughout those twenty years, Joseph did not darken the eyelids with kohl nor did he perfumed himself. He did that when Allah gathered him with his father and his brothers.

12. The Period of Jacob's Life in Egypt

Mohammed b. Moslem asked Imam Abu` Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, about the period of Jacob's life in Egypt. So, the Imam, peace be on him, replied: "Jacob lived with Joseph in Egypt for two years." Then, Mohammed b. Moslem asked the Imam: "Who was the proof of Allah in the earth- Jacob or Joseph?"

The Imam, peace be on him, replied: "Jacob was the proof, and Joseph was the king. When Jacob died, Joseph put him in a coffin and carried him to the land of Sham. He buried him at Jerusalem. Then, Joseph became the proof after Jacob.

Moreover, Mohammed asked the Imam: "Was Joseph an apostle and a prophet? "The Imam replied: "Yes. Do you not hear these

words of Allah, the Great and Almighty: 'Indeed, Joseph had brought you the clear proofs before.

This is some of what was reported on the authority of al-Baqir, peace be on him, concerning the conditions and lives of the prophets.

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Imam al-Baqir's Valuable Commandments

❖ His Commandments to his Son al-Sadiq (a.s.)

Imam Abu Ja'far (al-Baqir), peace be on him, supplied his son al-Sadiq with a group of valuable commandments. The following are some of them:

1. He, peace be on him, said: "O My little son, indeed, Allah has hidden three things in three things. He has hidden his pleasure in His obedience. So, do not scorn anything of obedience. Perhaps His pleasure is in it. He has hidden His wrath in His disobedience. So, do not scorn anything of disobedience. Perhaps His wrath is in it. And He has hidden His friends among His creatures. So, do not scorn anyone. Perhaps he is a friend."

These commandments are full of high moral standards. They urge people to obey Allah. They warn them intensely from disobeying Him. Moreover, they urge them to respect each other.

2. Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, related to Sufyan al-Thawri some of his father's commandments. He said to him: "O Sufyan, my father ordered me (to do) three, and prevented me (from doing) three. Among what he said to me is:

'O My little son, he who makes friends with a bad friend is not safe. Whoever enters into evil affairs is accused. He who does not restrain his tongue is regretful. Then he recited to me: (If you) habituate your tongue to good words, you will have a high rank with it. It is authorized to take the good and the bad (things) you have established for it. So, think of the way to habituate it.'" These

commandments are among the most wonderful maxims, and among the best commandments of the righteous to their children. For they have all the necessities of the rules of conduct and virtues.

❖ Imam Baqir's (a.s.) Commandments To Jabir al-Ju`fi

It is related that Imam Al-Baqir (a.s.) said to Jabir:

O Jabir, you should win five matters from the people of your time: They will not know you when you are present (in a gathering), they will not miss you when you are absent, they will not seek your consult when you witness a matter, they will not listen to you when you provide an opinion, and they will not give you in marriage when you betroth.

I advise you to cling to five matters: you should not oppress him who oppressed you; you should not cheat him who cheated you; you should not be angry when you are belied; you should not be happy when you are praised; and you should not be miserable when you are dispraised. Think of the dispraise that is said about you. If it is true, then it will be more catastrophic for you to be disregarded by Allah than being disregarded by people when you decline the right. If it is incorrect, then it will be a reward that you gained without exerting any effort.

You should know that if all the people of your region say unanimously that you are bad, this should not shake you, and if they all say unanimously that you are good, this should not please you and make you one of our followers. To be our follower, you should measure yourself according to the criteria of Allah's Book.

If you take its path, abstain from what it warns, desire for what it urges, and fear of what it cautions, then you should be stable and glad. In this case, whatever is said against you will not injure you. If you oppose the instructions of the Quran, then in what are you proud?

The faithful believer should engage himself in fighting against his desires for overcoming his passions. Once, he wins and opposes his passion for Allah's sake, and once his passions overcome him.

Thus, he follows his whims, but he will live again as Allah grants him a new life and will remember as Allah pardons his flaws.

As he seeks the refuge of repentance and God-fearing, he will be supplied with guidance and knowledge as much as he fears Allah. This is because Allah says: Surely those who guard against evil, when a visitation from the Shaitan afflicts them then become intelligent, then lo! They see. (al-A`raf 7:201)

O Jabir, regard Allah's few sustenance as very much so as to be able to thank Him suitably. Regard your many acts of obedience to Allah as few so as to lower yourself (before Allah) and seek His pardon. Refute the present evil by the present knowledge. Use the present knowledge for achieving honesty in your deeds. In the honesty of deeds, protect yourself against the great inadvertence through the tension of wakefulness by the sincerity of fear. Beware of the content of ornamentation with the presence of life.

Be careful of the adventures of the whims by referring to the indications of the mind. Stop at the overcome of the whim by seeking the guidance of knowledge. Spare the well-intended deeds to the Day of Judgment.

Push yourself into the fields of satisfaction by guarding against acquisitiveness. Refute the great acquisitiveness by the preference of satisfaction. Obtain the sweetness of abstinence through the disregard of hope.

Cut off the causes of avarice with the coolness of despair. Block the path of arrogance with self-realization. Conclude to self-satisfaction by the sound commendation to Allah. Seek the physical relaxation through freedom from card. Obtain the freedom from care through fewness of mistakes. Attain soft heartedness by the very much mentioning of Allah in seclusions. Get the illumination of heart from the continuance of sadness. Protect (yourself) against the Shaitan by the honest God-Fearing.

Beware of the false expectation, because it traps you in serious fear. Adorn for Allah through sincerity of deeds. Approach Allah by means of asking for meeting Him as soon as possible. Beware of

negligence, because it is an ocean in which the unsuccessful ones will sink. Beware of inadvertence, because it is the source of hard-heartedness. Beware of slowness in matters that are unexcused, because it is the path of the regretful.

Remember the past sins through the tense sorrow and the plenty of seeking forgiveness. Meet Allah's mercy and pardon by the good review with Him. Seek the aid of the well-intended supplications and the secret beseeching in darkness for achieving the good review with Allah. Reach the great thankfulness through regarding the little sustenance as great and regarding te many acts of obedience to Allah as few. Bring the increase of graces through the great thanking.

Beg to the great thanking through fearing the vanishing of graces. Seek the continuance of honor through killing avarices. Refute the humility of greed by the honor of despair. Get the honor of despair from the strength of mind. Supply for yourself from this world through the disregard of hope.

Take the initiative in seizing the opportunities whenever they are available. No opportunity like the leisure times with good health. Beware of trusting the dishonest. Evil is a custom such as the custom of having food.

Know that no knowledge like seeking safety, no safety like the safety of heart, no intelligence like opposing the whims, no fear like the fear of him who avoids sinning, no hope like the hope of the supporter, no poverty like the heart poverty, no richness like self-sufficiency, no strength like overcoming the whims, no illumination like the illumination of conviction, no conviction like belittling the worldly pleasures, no knowledge like self-realization, no grace like good health, no health like supporting for prosperity, no honor like willpower, no abstinence like disregard of hope, no diligence like competition for (attaining) the (highest) ranks, no justice like fairness, no aggression like prejudice, no prejudice like accordance with the whims, no obedience like performing the obligatory rites, no fear like grief, no misfortune like unintelligence, no unintelligence like littleness of conviction, no littleness of conviction like loss of fear, no jihad like struggling against the whims, no

power like stopping the rage, no disobedience like love of survival, and no humility like the humility greed. Beware of the negligence of given opportunities, because it is a field of loss.

More Words to Jabir Jabir narrated:

One day, Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) went out saying, "O Jabir, by Allah, I am grieved and my heart is so engaged." "What grieves you and in what is your heart engaged? May Allah make me your sacrifice. Is it for the world?" I asked. He(a.s.) answered: No, Jabir, it is the grief for the care of the world to come. He whose heart is occupied by the pure reality of faith will be far away from the worldly pleasures. The adornment of this world is only playing and fun. The Last Lodge is the true life.

O Jabir, The faithful believer should not incline and feel secure with the adornment of the world. You should know that the seekers of the worldly affairs are the people of deception and ignorance, while the seekers of the life to come are the faithful believers, who work and abstain pondering (over things), learning lessons, and test. They never tire of mentioning Allah.

You should know, Jabir, that the true rich men are the God-fearing people. They are sufficed with the little worldly means. Their burdens are light. They remind you, if you forget, of charity, and help you do it. They postponed their lusts and desires and preferred the acts of obedience to their Lord. They looked for the course of charity and the loyalty to the disciples of Allah; then loved, pursued, and followed them.

Consider this world as a lodging in which you reside for one hour only and then you will leave, or as a funds that you got in dream and made you happy, but when you woke up it was nothing. I exemplified for you so that you will be intelligent, as you will practice it, if Allah prospers you.

Retain, O Jabir, these matters of religion and the Lord's words of wisdom that I am entrusting with you. Offer advice for yourself and look in the standings that Allah has deposited with you in your life. In the same way, you will find your pledge with Him when you will

be returned to Him. See if the world is the opposite of what I have described for you, you should shift to the lodging of the blame, today.

It happens that one gets what he desires from the worldly affairs, but it becomes the source of misfortune and unhappiness for him. Likewise, it happens that one disliked a matter of the world to come, but when he got it, it was the source of happiness for him.

❖ His Commandments to one of his Companions

One of the companions of the Imam, peace be on him, wanted to travel. So, the Imam, peace be on him, supplied him with these valuable commandments. He said to him:

"Do not walk bare-footed. Do not dismount from your horse at night to relieve nature unless your feet are in the sandals. Do not urinate into a crack. Do not taste or smell a plant unless you know what it is. Do not drink out of a water skin unless you know what it is in it. Be careful of the one whom you know. Do not accompany the one whom you do not know."

The Imam, peace be on him, advised his companion to follow health methods and moral lessons that secured for him health and safety. As for the Imam's commandments concerning health and prevention from diseases, they are as follows:

1. The Imam advised the Moslem not to walk bare-footed. For walking without sandals makes man liable to germs that may enter his body through the pores of his feet, such as the germs that bring about Bilharzia.

2. He advised him not to dismount his horse and walk bare-footed at night to relieve nature. For he might be liable to the stings and bitings of the creatures that had hidden themselves in the earth. So, they would come and sting or bite him while he did not know.

3. He advised him not to urinate into a crack. For some deadly animals might hide themselves in the crack. Thus, they would come out and kill him.

4. He advised him not to eat any plant in the desert. For some plants might be poisonous. So, if he had eaten them, they would have poisoned him or made him ill.

5. He advised him not to drink out of the water skin unless he knew what was in it. For it might have some bad drink. So, if he had drunk it, it would have killed him or made him sick. As for the moral lessons, they are as follows:

1. He advised him to be careful of the unknown people. He advised him not to reveal his secrets for them. He advised him to accompany them well out of fear of them.

Traveling usually discovers the true nature of a person and reveals his hidden secrets. Many friends travel together. They love each other. When they come back, they curse each other. So, during traveling, the righteous person must remain wary of those whom he knows and those whom he does not know.

2. He advised him not to travel with those whom he did not know. For such a journey might cause many difficulties for him or it might cause his death. Many times, that befell travelers who traveled with those whom they did not know.

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CHAPTER SIX

Imam al-Sadiq

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.)

(702 AD – 765 AD)

Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq was born in Medina in the year 83 A.H. (702 AD). His mother, Umm Farwa, was the granddaughter of Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, who was one of the companions of Imam Ali (a.s.). His father, Abu Ja`far Muhammad ibn Ali (peace be on him), was the fifth Shi`a Imam. So Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) is the sixth Imam to the Shi'a Muslims. His Imamate, peace be on him, lasted for thirty-four years. Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) was poisoned by Al-Mansur, and died in the year 148 AH (765 AD) in Madineh at the age of sixty five.

In his early age, Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) studied under his grandfather, Ali ibn Husayn (a.s.). After his grandfather's death, he studied under and accompanied his father, Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.), until Muhammad al-Baqir died in 733.

Imam al-Sadiq is said to be highly respected by both Shi`a and Sunni Muslims for his great Islamic scholarship, pious character, and academic contributions. Although he is perhaps most famous as the founder of Shi`a fiqh, known as Ja'fari jurisprudence, he had many other accomplishments.

He was a polymath: an astronomer, alchemist, Imam, Islamic scholar, Islamic theologian, writer, philosopher, physician, physicist and scientist.

The new Abbasid rulers, who had risen to power on the basis of their claim to descent from Muhammad's uncle Abbas, were extremely suspicious of Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.), whom many considered to have a better claim to the caliphate. Imam was watched closely and, occasionally, imprisoned to cut his ties with his followers. Imam al-Sadiq endured the persecution patiently and continued his study and writing wherever he found himself.

His profound knowledge of religion and other sciences was famed throughout the entire Islamic world. People came from distant regions to learn from him. The number of his students reached over Four Thousand. Among them were scholars of Jurisprudence, Tafsir, Hadith, Kalam (theology) and even science. The foremost Islamic alchemist, Abu Musa Jabir ibn Hayyan, known in Europe as Geber, was Ja'far al-Sadiq's most prominent student. Ja'far al-Sadiq was known for his liberal views on learning, and was keen to debate with scholars of different faiths and of different beliefs. Heads of other religions also came there to discuss with the Imam’s students many matters of dispute and on many occasions returned home embracing Islam. Sometimes he himself argued with the opponents especially atheists.

In what follows, some selected sermons and wise maxims are given of the Imam al-Sadiq’s teaching with regard to the area of moral conducts and ethical values.

Lantern of the Path مصباح الشريعة

Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq (Pbuh): Translated by Fadlallah Haeri.

SECTION 1

Bondage ('ubudiyah)

The roots of conduct have four aspects: conduct with Allah (SWT), conduct with the self, conduct with creation (i.e. people), and conduct with this world. Each of these aspects is based upon seven principles, just as there are seven principles of conduct with Allah (SWT): giving Him His due, keeping His limits, being thankful for His gift, being content with His decree, being patient with His trials, glorifying His sanctity, and yearning for Him.

The seven principles of conduct with the self are fear, striving, enduring harm, spiritual discipline, seeking truthfulness and sincerity, withdrawing the self from what it loves, and binding it in poverty (faqr).

The seven principles of conduct with creation are forbearance, forgiveness, humility, generosity, compassion, good counsel, justice and fairness.

The seven principles of conduct with this world are being content with what is at hand, preferring what is available to what is not, abandoning the quest for the elusive, hating overabundance, choosing abstinence (zuhd), knowing the evils of this world and abandoning any desire for it, and negating its dominance. When all these qualities are found in one person, he is then one of Allah (SWT)'s elite, one of His close bondsman and friends (awliya').

Bondage is an essence, the inner nature of which is lordship (rububiyah). Whatever is missing in bondage is found in lordship, and whatever is veiled from lordship is found in bondage. As Allah (SWT) said,

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْآفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

We will soon show them Our signs in the universe and in their own souls, until it will become quite clear to them that it is the truth. Is it not sufficient as regards your Lord that He is a witness over all things? (Q. 41:53)

This means He exists both in your absence and in your presence. Bondage means ridding oneself of everything, and the way to obtain this is to deny the self what it desires and to make it bear what it dislikes. The key to this is abandoning rest, loving seclusion and following the path of recognition of the need for Allah (SWT).

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'Worship Allah (SWT) as if you see Him. Even if you do not see Him, He sees you.' The letters of the Arabic word for 'bondsman'('abd) are three; 'ayn, ba' and dal. The 'ayn is one's knowledge ('ilm) of Allah (SWT). The ba' is one's distance (bawn) from other than Him, and the dal is one's nearness (dunuw) to Allah (SWT) with the restriction of neither contingent qualities nor veil.

The principles of conduct have four aspects, as we mentioned at the beginning of the first chapter.

On Lowering the Gaze

There is nothing more gainful than lowering one's gaze, for the sight is not lowered from things, which Allah (SWT) has forbidden unless the witnessing of majesty and glory has already come to the heart. The Commander of the Faithful was asked what could help in lowering one's gaze. He said, 'Submission to the power of Him Who is aware of your secret. The eye is the spy of the hearts and the messenger of the intellect; therefore lower your gaze from whatever is not appropriate to your faith, from whatever your heart dislikes and from whatever your intellect finds repugnant.'

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'Lower your eyes and you will see wonders.' Allah (SWT) said,

قُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَٰلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ

Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts. (Q. 24:30)

'Isa (peace be upon him) said to the disciples, 'Beware of looking at forbidden things, for that is the seed of desire and leads to deviant behavior.'

John the Baptist (peace be upon him) said, 'I would prefer death to a glance which is unnecessary.' 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said to a man who had visited a woman while she was ill, 'It would have been better for you to lose your eyes than to have visited your sick person.'

Whenever the eye looks at something forbidden, a knot of desire is tied in the person's heart, and that knot will only be united by one of two conditions: either by weeping out of grief and regret in true repentance, or by taking possession of what one desired and looked at. And if a person takes possession unjustly, without repentance, then that will take him to the Fire.

As for the one who repents of it with grief and regret, his abode is the Garden and his destiny is Allah (SWT)'s favor.

On Walking

If you are intelligent, then you should be of firm resolution and sincere intention before you set out for any place, for surely the self's nature is to overstep the bounds and encroach on the forbidden. You should reflect when you walk, and take note of the wonders of Allah (SWT)'s work wherever you go. Do not be mocking, or strut when you walk; Allah (SWT) said,

﴿...وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا...﴾

Do not go about in the land exulting overmuch. (Q. 31:18)

Lower your gaze from whatever is inappropriate to faith, and remember Allah (SWT) frequently. There is a tradition which savs that those places where, and in connection with which, Allah (SWT) is mentioned will testify to that before Allah (SWT) on the Day of Judgment and will ask forgiveness for those people so that Allah (SWT) will let them enter the Garden.

Do not speak excessively with people along the way, for that is bad manners. Most of the roads are the traps and markets of Satan, so do not feel safe from his tricks. Make your coming and your going in obedience to Allah (SWT), striving for His pleasure, for all your movements will be recorded in your book,' as Allah (SWT) said,

﴿يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

On the day when their tongues and their hands and their feet shall bear witness against them regarding what they did, (Q. 24:24) and;

﴿وَكُلَّ إِنسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَآئِرَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ﴾

We have made every man's actions to cling to his neck. (Q. 17:13)

SECTION 2

On Knowledge

Knowledge is the basis of every sublime state and the culmination of every high station. That is why the Holy Prophet (peace be upon

him and his family) said, 'It is the duty of every Muslim, man and woman, to seek knowledge,' that is, the knowledge of precaution (taqwa) and certainty. Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) said, "Seek knowledge, though it be in China,' meaning the knowledge of gnosis of the self, in it is contained knowledge of the Lord. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'Whoever knows his own self knows his Lord; more over, you should acquire that knowledge without which no action is correct, and that is sincerity ... We seek refuge with Allah (SWT) from knowledge which has no benefit', that is, from knowledge which is contrary to actions performed with sincerity.

Know that a small amount of knowledge requires a great deal of action, because knowledge of the Hour' requires the person who has such knowledge to act accordingly during his entire life. 'Isa (peace be upon him) said, 'I saw a stone on which was written, "Turn me over", so I turned it over. Written on the other side was "Whoever does not act by what he knows will be doomed by seeking what he does not know, and his own knowledge will be turned against him." '

Allah (SWT) revealed to David, 'The least that I shall do to someone with knowledge who does not act by his knowledge is worse than the seventy inner punishments which result in My removing from his heart the sweetness of My remembrance.' There is no way to Allah (SWT) except via knowledge. And knowledge is the adornment of man in this world and the next, his driver to Paradise, and by means of it he attains Allah (SWT)'s contentment with him.

He who truly knows is the one in whom sound actions, pure supplications, truthfulness and precaution speak out; not his tongue, his debates, his comparisons, assertions or claims. In times other than these, those who sought knowledge were those who had intellect, piety, wisdom, modesty and caution; but nowadays we see that those who seek it do not have any of these qualities. The man of knowledge needs intellect, kindness, compassion, good counsel, forbearance, patience, contentment and generosity; while anyone wishing to learn needs a desire for knowledge, will, devotion (of his time and energy), piety, caution, memory and

resolution.

Giving Judgment

Giving judgment is not permissible for someone who has not been endowed by Allah (SWT) with the qualities of inner purity, sincerity in both his hidden and visible actions, and a proof from his Lord in every state. This is because whoever has judged has decreed, and decree is only valid by the permission of Allah (SWT) and by His proof. Whoever is liberal in his judgment, without having made a proper examination, is ignorant and will be taken to task for his ignorance and will be burdened with his judgment as the tradition indicates. Knowledge is a light, which Allah (SWT) casts into the heart of whomsoever He wills.

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'Whoever is boldest among you in judging is also the most insolent to Allah (SWT)'. Does not the judge know that he is the one who has come between Allah (SWT) and His bondsmen, and that he is wavering between the Garden and the Fire? Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah said, 'How can anyone else benefit from my knowledge if I have denied myself its benefit?' It is inappropriate for anyone to judge on what is permissible (Halal) and what is forbidden (Haram) among creation, except for one who causes the people of his time, his village, and his city to follow the truth through obedience to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and who recognizes what is applicable of his judgment. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'It is because giving judgment is such a tremendous affair, in which there is no place for "hopefully", "perhaps" or "may be".'

The Commander of the Faithful said to a judge, "Do you know the difference between those verses of the Qur'an which abrogate and those which are abrogated?" 'No'.

'Do you have a command of the intentions of Allah (SWT) in the parables of the Qur'an?' 'No'.

'Then you have perished and caused others to perish,' the Commander of the Faithful replied.

A judge needs to know the various meanings of the Qur'an, the truth of the Holy Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) way, the inward indications, courtesies, consensus and disagreements, and to be familiar with the bases of what they agree upon and disagree about. Then he must have acute discrimination, sound action, wisdom, and precaution. If he has these things, then let him judge.

Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil

Whoever has not thrown off his anxieties, been purified of the evils of his self and its appetites, defeated Satan, and entered under the guardianship of Allah (SWT) and the security of His protection, cannot properly enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil; and since he has not attained these aforementioned qualities, whatever affair he tackles in attempting to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil will be a proof against him, and people will not benefit from it. Allah (SWT) said,

﴿أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنسَوْنَ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلاَ تَعْقِلُونَ﴾

What! Do you enjoin men to be good and neglect your own souls? (Q. 2:44)

Anyone who does that is called upon thus: Oh- traitor! Do you demand from My creation that which you have rejected for yourself and have slackened the reins [in this regard] upon yourself? It is related that Tha'labah al-Asadi asked the Messenger of Allah about this verse:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ لاَ يَضُرُّكُم مَّن ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ﴾

O you who believe! Take care of your souls; he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way. (Q. 5:105) The Messenger of Allah said, 'Enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and be forbearing in whatever afflicts you, until such time when you see meanness obeyed and passions followed, and when everyone will have conceit about their own opinion, then you should concern yourself only with yourself, and ignore the affairs of the common people.'

A person who enjoins what is good needs to be knowledgeable about what is permissible and what is forbidden; he must be free from his personal inclinations regarding what he enjoins and forbids, give good counsel to people, be merciful and compassionate to them, and call them with gentleness in a very clear manner, while recognizing their different characters so that he can put each in his proper place.

He must see the intrigues of the self and the machinations of Satan. He must be patient in whatever befalls him, and must not seek compensation from people for that which he instructs them in, nor complain about them. He should not make use of vehemence or passion. He should not become angry for his own sake. He should make his intention purely for Allah (SWT), and seek His help and desire Him. But if people oppose him and are harsh to him, he must be patient; and if they agree with him and accept his verdict, he must be thankful, entrusting his affair to Allah (SWT) and looking to his own faults.

SECTION 3

How the Men of Knowledge are Ruined

Caution and fear are the legacy of knowledge and its measure; knowledge is the ray of gnosis and the heart of belief. Whoever is denied caution is not a man of knowledge, even if he can split hairs in dealing with obscure items of knowledge. Allah (SWT) said,

﴿إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاء...﴾

Only those of His servants who are possessed of knowledge fear Allah. (Q. 35:28)

Men of knowledge are ruined by eight things: greed and miserliness, showing off and partisanship, love of praise, delving into things whose reality they cannot reach, affectation by taking excessive pains to beautify their speech with superfluous expressions, lack of modesty before Allah (SWT), boastfulness, and not acting upon what they know.

'Isa (peace be upon him) said, 'The most wretched of all people is he who is known for his knowledge, not for his actions.' The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'Do not sit with every presumptuous caller who summons you from certainty to doubt, from sincerity to showing off, from humility to pride, from good counsel to enmity, and from abstinence to desire. Draw near to the person with knowledge, who summons you from pride to humility, from showing off to sincerity, from doubt to certainty, from desire to abstinence, from enmity to good counsel.' None are fit to preach to creation except that person who has gone beyond these evils by his truthfulness. He sees the faults of speech and knows what is sound from what is unsound, the defectiveness of thoughts, and the temptations of the self and his fancies.

'Ali (peace be upon him) said, 'Be like the kind, compassionate doctor who places the remedy where it will be of benefit.' They asked 'Isa (peace be upon him), 'With whom shall we sit, O Spirit of Allah (SWT)?' 'With one the sight of whom reminds you of Allah (SWT),' he replied, 'and whose speech increases you in knowledge and whose actions make you desire the next world.'

Guarding Oneself (ri'ayah)

Whoever guards his heart from heedlessness, protects his self from appetites, and guards his intellect from ignorance, will be admitted into the company of the vigilant. Then he who guards his knowledge from fancies, his faith from innovation, and his property from the forbidden is among the righteous.

The Messenger of Allah said, 'It is a duty for every Muslim, man and woman, to seek knowledge,' that is, knowledge of the self. Therefore it is necessary for the self to be in all states either expressing his gratitude or proffering his excuse for lack of gratitude. If this is acceptable to Allah (SWT) it is a favor upon him, and if not it is justice upon him. For every self it is necessary to work that it may succeed in its acts of obedience, and for its protection in its efforts to abstain from doing harm.

The basis of all this is recognition of total need and dependence on Allah (SWT), caution and obedience. The key to it is in delegating your affair to Allah (SWT), cutting off expectation by always

remembering death, and seeing that you are standing in the presence of the All compelling. This gives you rest from confinement, rescue from the enemy, and peace for the self. The means to sincerity in obedience is harmony, and the root of that rests upon considering life as being only as long as a day. The Messenger of Allah said, 'This world lasts but an hour, so spend it in obedience to Allah (SWT).' The door to all of this is always to withdraw from the world by means of constant reflection. The means to this withdrawal is contentment, and abandoning such existential matters as do not concern you. The means to reflection is emptiness [desirelessness], and the buttress of emptiness is abstinence. The completion of abstinence is precaution, and the door to precaution is fear. The proof of fear is glorification of Allah (SWT), adherence to obeying His commands with sincerity, fear and caution, and holding back from the forbidden; and the guide to this is knowledge. Almighty Allah (SWT) said,

﴿إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاء﴾

Those of His servants who are possessed of knowledge fear Allah. (Q. 35:28)

Thankfulness

With every breath you take, a thanksgiving is incumbent upon you, indeed, a thousand thanks or more. The lowest level of gratitude is to see that the blessing comes from Allah (SWT) irrespective of the cause for it, and without the heart being attached to that cause. It consists of being satisfied with what is given; it means not disobeying Him with regard to His blessing, or opposing Him in any of His commands and prohibitions because of His blessing. Be a grateful bondsman to Allah (SWT) in every way, and you will find that Allah (SWT) is a generous Lord in every way. If there were a way of worshipping Allah (SWT) for His sincerest bondsman to follow more excellent than giving thanks at every instance, He would have ascribed to them the name of this worship above the rest of creation. Since there is no form of worship better than that, He has singled out this kind of worship from other kinds of worship, and has singled out those who practise this kind of worship, saying,

﴿وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّكُورُ...﴾

Very few of my servants are grateful. (Q. 34:13)

Complete thankfulness is to sincerely repent your inability to convey the least amount of gratitude, and expressing this by means of your sincere glorification of Allah (SWT). This is because fitting thanks is itself a blessing bestowed upon the bondsman for which he must also give thanks; it is of greater merit and of a higher state than the original blessing which caused him to respond with thanks in the first place. Therefore, every time one gives thanks one is obliged to give yet greater thanks, and so on ad infinitum, and this while absorbed in His blessings and unable to achieve the ultimate state of gratitude.

For how can the bondsman match with gratitude the blessings of Allah (SWT), and when will he match his own action with Allah (SWT)'s while all along the bondsman is weak and has no power whatsoever, except from Allah (SWT)?

Allah (SWT) is not in need of the obedience of His bondsmen, for He has the power to increase blessings forever. Therefore be a grateful bondsman to Allah (SWT), and in this manner you will see wonders.

On Leaving your Home

When you leave your home, do it as if you will never return. Leave only for the sake of obedience to Allah (SWT) or for the sake of the faith. Remain tranquil and dignified in your bearing, and remember Allah (SWT) both secretly and openly.

One of the companions of Abu Dharr asked a member of Abu Dharr's household where he was and she said, 'He has gone out.' When the man asked when Abu Dharr would return, she replied, 'When he returns is in the hands of someone else,' for he has no power on his own. Learn from Allah (SWT)'s creation, both the pious and the deviants, wherever you go. Ask Allah (SWT) to place you among His sincere and truthful bondsmen, and to join you to those of them who have passed on and to gather you in their company. Praise Him, and give thanks for the appetites He has made you avoid, and the ugly actions of the wrongdoers from which He has protected you. Lower your gaze from carnal appetites and forbidden things, and pursue the right course on your journey.

Be vigilant, fearing Allah (SWT) at every step, as if you were crossing the straight path. Do not be distracted. Offer a greeting to His people, both giving it first and answering with it. Give help to those who ask for it in a righteous cause, guide those who are lost and ignore the ignorant.

When you return to your home, enter it as a corpse enters the grave, its only concern being to receive the mercy and forgiveness of Allah (SWT).

On Reciting the Qur'an

Whoever recites the Qur'an and does not humble himself before Allah (SWT), whose heart is not softened, nor regret and fear provoked within him, undervalues the immensity of Allah (SWT)'s affair and is in a clear state of loss.

The person who recites the Qur'an needs three things: a fearful heart, a tranquil and receptive body, and an appropriate place to recite.

When his heart fears Allah (SWT), then the accursed Satan flees from him. As Allah (SWT) said,

﴿فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ﴾

When you recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Shaytan. (Q. 16:98)

When he frees himself of all attachments, then his heart is devoted to recitation, and nothing impedes him from obtaining the blessing of the light of the Quran and its benefits. When he finds an empty place and withdraws from people, having acquired the two qualities of humility of heart and tranquility of body, then his soul and his innermost being will feel communion with Allah (SWT), and he will discover the sweetness of how Allah (SWT) speaks to His right-acting bondsmen, how He shows His gentleness, to them and singles them out for all the varieties of His marks of honor and wondrous signs. If he drinks a cup of this drink, he will never prefer any other state to this nor any other moment to this. He will prefer this to every act of obedience and devotion, since it contains intimate conversation with the Lord, without any intermediary.

So beware of how you read the Book of your Lord, the guardian to whom you aspire, how you respond to His commands and avoid His prohibitions, and how you observe His limits, for it is a mighty Book: Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it,

﴿...تَنزِيلٌ مِّنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ...﴾

…a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One. (Q. 41:42)

Therefore recite it in an orderly manner and contemplatively) and adhere to the limits of His promise and His threat. Reflect on its examples and warnings. Beware of paying undue respect to the recitation of its letters while failing to observe the legal limits contained therein.

SECTION 4

Dress

The best adornment of the believer's garment is precaution and the most blessed garment is belief. As Allah (SWT) said,

﴿...وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ...﴾

And clothing that guards [against evil]; that is best. (Q. 7:26)

Outward dress is a blessing from Allah (SWT) in order to preserve the modesty of the sons of Adam; it is a mark of honor which Allah (SWT) has given to the descendants of Adam. He did not give that honor to any other creature; it is given to the believers as a means of carrying out their obligations. Your best garments are those which do not distract you from Allah (SWT), those garments, in fact, which bring you closer to remembrance of Him, and gratitude and obedience to Him. They do not, however, move you to pride, conceit, pretence, boastfulness or arrogance: those things are the scourge of the faith, and their legacy is hardness of heart. When you put on your clothes, remember that Allah (SWT) veils your wrong actions with His mercy. You should clothe your inward part as you clothe your outward part with your garment. Let your inward truth be veiled in awe of Allah (SWT), and let your outward

truth be veiled in obedience. Take heed of the overflowing favor of Allah (SWT), since He created the means to make garments for covering physical immodesty and opened the gates for repentance, regret, and seeking succor, in order to veil the inward parts, and their wrong actions and bad character.

Do not expose anyone's faults when Allah (SWT) has concealed worse things in yourself. Occupy yourself with your own faults, and overlook matters and situations which do not concern you. Beware lest you exhaust your life in other people's actions and exchange your irreplaceable endowed wealth with someone else, thereby destroying yourself. Forgetting wrong actions brings about the greatest punishments of Allah (SWT) in this world, and is the most ample cause for punishment in the next. So long as the bondsman occupies himself with obeying Allah (SWT), with recognizing his own faults and leaving alone whatever might devalue faith in Allah (SWT), he is spared ruin and is immersed in the sea of Allah (SWT)'s mercy, attaining the gems and the benefits of wisdom and clarity. But as long as he forgets his own wrong actions, is ignorant of his own faults, and falls back on his power and strength, he will never be successful.

Showing Off

Do not show off your actions to someone who neither gives life nor causes death, and who cannot take away from you your burdens. Showing off is a tree whose only fruit is hidden association of other Allah (SWT)s with Allah (SWT), and its root is hypocrisy. The vain one will be told on the Day of Judgment; 'Take what you consider to be the reward of your actions from those you took as your partners with Me. Look to those whom you worshipped and called on, from whom you entertained hopes and whom you feared. And know that you cannot conceal anything inside of you from Allah (SWT): you will be deceived by yourself.'

Allah (SWT) said,

﴿ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلاَّ أَنفُسَهُم وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴾

They desire to deceive Allah and those who believe, and they deceive only themselves and they do not perceive. (Q. 2:9)

Showing off most frequently occurs in the way people glance at others, speak, eat, drink, arrive somewhere, sit with others, dress, laugh, and in the way they perform prayers, pilgrimage, jihad, recitation of the Qur'an, and all outward acts of devotion. However, he who is sincere towards Allah (SWT), who fears Him in his heart, and who sees himself as lacking even after he has exerted himself with every effort, will find that Allah (SWT) is contented with him as a result, and he will be among those whom one expects to be free from showing off and hypocrisy, provided he continues to be in that state.

Truthfulness

Truthfulness is a light which radiates its reality in its own world: it is like the sun, from whose reality everything seeks light without any decrease occurring in this reality. A truthful person, in fact, is a man who believes every liar, due to the reality of his own truthfulness. It means that nothing which is opposed to truthfulness, nothing, even, which is not truthfulness, is permitted to coexist with it; just as happened with Adam, who believed Iblis when he lied because Iblis had sworn a false oath to him and there was no lying in Adam. Allah (SWT) said,

﴿... وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهُ عَزْمًا... ﴾

We did not find in him any determination. (Q. 20:115)

Because Iblis originated something previously unknown, both outwardly and inwardly. Iblis will be gathered with his lie, and he will never benefit from the truthfulness of Adam. Yet it benefited Adam that he believed the lie of Iblis, as Allah (SWT) testified for him when He said that he was not constant in what was contrary to his custom. This really means that his being chosen was not at all diminished by Satan's lies.

Truthfulness is the attribute of the truthful. The reality of truthfulness demands that Allah (SWT) purify His bondsman, as He mentioned regarding the truthfulness - 'Isa (peace be upon him) on the Day of Reckoning. He indicated it by referring to the guiltlessness of the truthful men of the community of Muhammad, saying,

﴿...هَذَا يَوْمُ يَنفَعُ الصَّادِقِينَ صِدْقُهُمْ...﴾

This is the day when their truth shall benefit the truthful ones. (Q. 5:119)

The Commander of the Faithful' said, 'Truthfulness is the sword of Allah (SWT) in His heaven and earth: it cuts everything it touches.' If you want to know whether you are truthful or lying, then look into the truthfulness of what you mean and the conclusion of your claim. Then gauge them both according to a scale from Allah (SWT), as if you were present on the Day of Resurrection. Allah (SWT) said,

﴿...وَالْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ...﴾

And measuring out on that day will be just. (Q. 7:8)

If there is balance and harmony in what you mean, then your claim is successful, and your truthfulness is in the fact that the tongue does not differ from the heart, nor the heart from the tongue. The truthful person with this description is like the angel who draws out his soul; if the soul is not drawn out, then what is it to do?

Sincerity

Sincerity lies in all distinguished actions: it is a notion that starts with acceptance and ends with Allah (SWT)'s pleasure. Therefore he whose actions Allah (SWT) accepts and with whom He is content is the sincere one, even if his actions are few. Whoever does not have his actions accepted is not sincere, even if his actions are many, as we can see when we consider what happened with Adam and Iblis, may he be cursed.

The sign of acceptance is the existence of integrity and correctness, by expending all that is desirable with accurate awareness of every movement and stillness. In upholding what he has, the self of the sincere one is consumed, and his life is spent so as to put what he has in order, unifying knowledge and action, the doer and what is done by the action. For if he has attained that, he has attained all, and if he misses it he misses all; and that is brought about by purifying the meanings of disassociation (tanzih) in His unity. As the first Imam said, 'Those who act will perish, except for those

who worship; those who worship will perish except for those who know; those who know will perish except for those who are truthful; those who are truthful will perish except for those are sincere; those who are sincere will perish except for those who have precaution; those who have precaution will perish except for those who have certainty, and those who have certainty are of exalted character.' As Allah (SWT) said,

﴿وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ﴾

And serve your Lord until there comes to you that which is certain. (Q. 15:99)

The lowest level of sincerity is when the bondsman exerts himself as much as he can, and then does not consider his action to have any worth with Allah (SWT) so that he does not make his Lord recompense him for his actions according to his knowledge, for if Allah (SWT) asks him to fulfill the full duties of slavehood ('ubudiyah) he would be unable to do so. The lowest station of the sincere person in the world is safety from all wrong actions, to be rescued from the Fire and to win the Garden in the next world.

SECTION 5

Precaution

Precaution (taqwa) has three facets:

1. Precaution by dependence on Allah (SWT), which means leaving behind contradiction and going beyond any shade of doubt, and this is the precaution exercised by the highest.

2. The precaution of Allah (SWT), which means to abandon all doubtful matters and to leave the forbidden (haram) alone; this is the precaution of the elite.

3. The precaution of the Fire and Punishment, which results in leaving alone what is forbidden; this is the precaution of the general public.

Precaution is like water flowing in a river. The three levels of precaution are like trees of every color and variety planted on the bank of that river, each tree absorbing water from that river according to its essence, capacity, delicateness and thickness.

Then the benefits which creatures take from these trees and fruits are according to their value and worth. Allah (SWT) said,

﴿وَزَرْعٌ وَنَخِيلٌ صِنْوَانٌ وَغَيْرُ صِنْوَانٍ يُسْقَى بِمَاءٍ وَاحِدٍ وَنُفَضِّلُ بَعْضَهَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي الْأُكُلِ﴾

Palm trees having one root and [others] having distinct roots - they are watered with one water, and We make some of them excel others in fruit. (Q. 13:4)

Precaution in acts of obedience to Allah (SWT) is like water for the trees, and the natures of the trees and their fruits in their colors and tastes are like the measures of belief. Whoever has the highest degree in belief and the purest nature with respect to the soul has the greatest precaution. He who is precautious has the purer and more sincere worship: whoever is like that is nearer to Allah (SWT).

But every act of devotion that is founded on something other than precaution comes to nothing. Allah (SWT) said,

﴿أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَى تَقْوَى مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ أَم مَّنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىَ شَفَا جُرُفٍ هَارٍ فَانْهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ...﴾

Is he, therefore, better who laid his foundation on fear of Allah and [His] good pleasure, or he who laid his foundation on the edge of a cracking, hollowed bank, so it broke down with him into the fire of Hell? (Q. 9:109)

The explanation of precaution is to avoid entering an affair which contains no harm simply out of fear of one which does. It is, in reality, obedience without rebellion, remembrance without forgetfulness, knowledge without ignorance, and it is accepted by Allah (SWT) and not rejected.

Allah (SWT) fearing

Close the gates of your limbs and senses to all that will harm your heart, remove your standing with Allah (SWT), and bring in its wake grief and regret on the Day of Judgment and shame about the evil actions you committed.

The scrupulous person must have three principles: he should overlook the faults of all people, he should avoid offending them, and he should balance censure with praise.

The basis of Allah (SWT) fearingness is constantly to take the self to account, to be truthful in one's words and pure in one's transactions, to leave every doubtful thing, to abandon every defect and doubt, to separate oneself from all which does not concern you and not to open doors which you will not know how to close.

Do not sit with anyone who obscures what is clear for you, nor with someone who takes the faith lightly. Do not question knowledge which your heart has no capacity for, and which you will not understand, of whoever said it, and cut off anyone who cuts you off from Allah (SWT).

Social Interactions

Courteous social relations with Allah (SWT)'s creation while avoiding all acts of disobedience to Him is a sign of Allah (SWT)'s excessive generosity with His bondsman. Whoever is sincere and humble before Allah (SWT) in his innermost being will have good social interaction externally.

Keep company with people for the sake of Allah (SWT) and do not keep company merely for your own share of worldly affairs, for seeking rank, showing off, or for reputation. Do not fall below the limits of the shari'ah for the sake of social intercourse, such as trying to keep up with others, or gaining a reputation, for these things cannot make up for you, and you will miss the next world, with no recourse. Treat someone who is older than you as you would your father, someone who is younger than you as you would a son. Treat your peer as you would a brother. Do not abandon what you know to be certain within yourself for something heard

from other people which you doubt. Be gentle when you enjoin good, and compassionate when you forbid evil.

Never abandon good counsel in any circumstance. As Allah (SWT) said,

﴿وَقُولُواْ لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا...﴾

Speak to men good words. (Q. 2:83)

Cut yourself off from what makes you forget to remember Allah (SWT), when temptation distracts you from obedience to Him, for that comes from the friends and helpers of Satan. Do not allow the sight of them to move you to dissimulation with the truth, for that would be a terrible loss indeed. We seek refuge with Almighty Allah (SWT).

Sleep

Sleep the sleep of the mindful, do not sleep the sleep of the heedless. For the mindful among the astute sleep only for rest, and do not purposely sleep through laziness.

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'My eyes sleep, but my heart does not.' When you go to sleep, have the intention to lighten your burden on the angels and disengage the self from its appetites, and to examine yourself by your sleep; be aware of the fact that you are incapable and weak. You have no power over any of your movements and still nesses, except by the judgment and measure of Allah (SWT).

Know that sleep is the brother of death. Use it as a guide to death, for there is no way to wake up in death or to return to correct action once you have missed it. Whoever sleeps through an obligatory, recommended or supererogatory prayer is at fault, and his sleep is the sleep of the heedless and the path of the losers; he is at fault. Whoever sleeps after he has discharged his duties concerning obligatory and recommended prayers, and has carried out his responsibilities, sleeps a praiseworthy sleep. I do not know of anything that is safer than sleep for the people of our times who have attained these qualities: this is because people have ceased to guard their faith and to take care in observing their conduct. They

have taken the left-hand path. When a sincere bondsman strives not to speak out of place, how can he avoid hearing that which would prevent him from not speaking unless there is a safeguard? Sleep is one such safeguard. As Allah (SWT) said,

﴿إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَـئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْؤُولاً﴾

Surely, the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these shall be questioned about that. (Q. 17:36)

In excess sleep there are many evils, even if it is done in the way we have mentioned. Too much sleep is brought about by excess drink, and excess drinking is brought about being excessively satiated. Both of these things weigh heavily on the self to keep it from obedience, and they harden the heart from reflection and humility. Make your sleep your last affair in this world; remember Allah (SWT) with your heart and your tongue. Let your obedience to Allah (SWT) overpower your wrong doings and seek help from Him while you sleep, fasting until the morning prayer, since if you are awakened at night, Satan whispers to you, 'Sleep again, you still have a long night,' for he wants you to miss the time of intimate contemplation and exposure of your state before your Lord. Do not be distracted in seeking forgiveness at dawn, for at that time there is much yearning for those in devoted supplication.

SECTION 6

Pilgrimage

If you intend to go on pilgrimage, before resolving on it devote your heart to Allah (SWT), stripping it of every preoccupation and every barrier between you and Allah (SWT). Entrust all your affairs to your Creator; rely on Him in all your actions and moments of stillness. Surrender to His decree, decision and judgment. Abandon this world, repose, and all creation. Perform those duties which you are bound to fulfill for other people. Do not rely on your provisions, the animal you ride, your companions, your food, your youth nor your wealth, for fear that they will become your enemies and be harmful to you; in this way you will realize that there is no power, no strength, nor might except by the guardianship of Allah (SWT) and His granting of success.

Prepare for the pilgrimage as someone who does not hope to return. Keep good company, and be diligent in observing all your obligations to Allah (SWT) and the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) in practices. Take care to show courtesy, endurance, patience, thankfulness, compassion, and generosity, always putting others before yourself at all times, even those who reject you. Then perform an ablution with the water of sincere repentance for wrong actions; put on the robe of truthfulness, purity, humility and fear. By donning the garments of pilgrimage,' withhold yourself from everything which hinders you from remembering Allah (SWT), or that will impede you from showing obedience to Him.

Fulfill His call with an answer whose meaning is clear, pure and sincere when you call on Him, holding on firmly to your belief in Him. Circumambulate with your heart along with the angels who circumambulate the Throne, just as you circumambulate with the Muslims who go around the Ka'bah. Hasten as you run in flight from your passion, freeing yourself of all your personal assumptions of strength and power. Leave your heedlessness and errors behind when you go out to Mina; do not desire what is unlawful for you and what you do not deserve. Confess your errors at Arafat: set out your contract with Allah (SWT) by His Oneness, draw near to Him and fear Him at Muzdalifah. Climb with your soul to the highest assembly when you climb the mountain of Arafat. Slit the throat of passion and greed in the sacrifice. Stone your appetites, baseness, vileness, and blameworthy actions when you stone the Pillar of Aqabah. Shave off your outward and inward faults when you shave your hair. Enter into the security of Allah (SWT), His protection, His veil, His shelter and His watchfulness and abandon the pursuit of your desires by entering the Sacred Precinct. Visit the House, and walk around it to glorify its Master, His wisdom, His majesty and His power. Embrace the Stone, being content with His decree and humble before His might. Leave everything that is other-than-Him in the valedictory circumambulation. Purify your soul and your innermost being for the meeting with Allah (SWT), on the day when you will meet Him when standing on Safa'.

Take on valor and courtesy from Allah (SWT) by annihilating your attributes at Marwah. Be consistent in the conditions of your pilgrimage and fulfill the contract you have made with your Lord, by which you will have obliged yourself to Him on the Day of Judgment. Know that Allah (SWT) made the pilgrimage obligatory, and singled it out from all the acts of worship in respect of Himself when He said,

قُلْ مَن كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ عَلَىٰ قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

Pilgrimage to the House is incumbent upon men for the sake of Allah, and [upon] everyone who is able to undertake the journey to it. (Q. 3:97)

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) established the organization of the rituals of pilgrimage as preparation for, and an indication of, death, the grave, the resurrection and the Day of Judgment. In this lesson for mankind he discriminates between those who will enter the Garden and those who will enter the Fire, through his demonstrating the pilgrimage rites from beginning to end to those with intelligence and prudence.

Charity

Obligatory charity' for the sake of Allah (SWT) is due from every single part of your body, even from every root of your hair. In fact, charity is due for every instant of your life. Charity of the eye means looking with consideration and averting the gaze from desires and things similar to them. Charity of the ear means listening to the best of sounds, such as wisdom, the Qur'an, the benefits of the faith contained in warnings and good counsel, and to that in which your salvation lies, and by avoiding their opposite, such as lies, slander, and similar things.

Charity of the tongue means to give good counsel to the Muslims, to awaken those who are heedless, and to give abundant glorification and remembrance (dhikr), and other, similar things. Charity of the hand means spending money on others, to be generous with Allah (SWT)'s blessings to you, to use it in writing

down knowledge and information by means of which other Muslims will benefit in obedience to Allah (SWT), and to restrain the hand from evil. Charity of the foot means to hasten to carry out one's duty to Allah (SWT) by visiting virtuous people, assemblies of remembrance (dhikr), putting things right between people, maintaining ties of kinship, engaging in jihad, and doing things which will make your heart sound and your faith correct.

We have mentioned here just some of the ways of zakat, namely, those understood by the heart and those the self can deal with; although there are others too numerous to mention, mastered by no one but His sincere and intimate bondsmen. Indeed, these latter are the lords of zakat and to them belongs its mark of distinction. Oh Allah (SWT), give me success in what You love and in what makes You content.

Intention

The person who has a sincere intention is the one who has a sound heart; because a sound heart, free from thoughts about forbidden things, comes from making your intention purely for Allah (SWT) in all matters.

The day on which neither property will avail, nor sons, except him who comes to Allah with a heart free [from evil]. (Q. 26:88-9)

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'The intention of the believer is better than his action,' and also, 'Actions are by intentions, and every man will obtain what he had intended.' The slave of Allah (SWT) must therefore have sincere intention in every moment of action and stillness because then he will not be heedless. Those who are heedless have been censured by Allah (SWT):

﴿يَوْمَ لَا يَنفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ. إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ﴾

They are nothing but as cattle; nay, they are straying farther off from the path. (Q. 25:44)

﴿إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا﴾

These are the heedless ones. (Q. 7:179)

Intention appears from the heart, according to the purity of knowledge. It varies as belief varies, at different moments in its strength and weakness. The selfishness and passion of those with sincere intention is subjugated to the power of the glorification of Allah (SWT) and modesty before Him. He is by his nature, his appetites and his own desires, in a state of discomfort, and yet people find ease at his hand.

SECTION 7

Remembrance

He who truly remembers Allah (SWT) is the one who obeys Him: whoever forgets is disobedient. Obedience is the mark of guidance, disobedience the sign of misguidance. The root of both states lies in remembrance (dhikr) and forgetfulness. Make your heart the focal point of your tongue, which should not move unless the heart indicates, the intellect agrees and your tongue accords with belief. Almighty Allah (SWT) knows what you conceal and what you reveal.
Be like someone who has shed his soul from his body, or like someone who is attending the great parade on the Day of Reckoning, not distracting yourself from the obligations which your Lord has laid on you in His commands and prohibitions, His promise and His threat. Do not be occupied with yourself rather than with the duties laid down for you by your Lord. Wash your heart clean with the water of sorrow and fear; make remembrance of Allah (SWT) part of His most glorious remembrance of you. He remembers you, but He does not need you. His remembrance of you is more glorious, more desirable, more praiseworthy, A more complete and more ancient than your remembrance of Him.

The knowledge you obtain by His remembrance of you will beget you humility, modesty and contrition, which will in turn be the cause of your witnessing His nobility and previous, overflowing favor. The latter will then belittle your obedience in your own eyes, however copious it may be as a result of His favors; and you will be sincerely devoted to Him. But your consciousness and esteem of your own remembrance of Him will lead to showing off, pride, foolishness and coarseness in your character, for it means

attaching too much importance to your obedience while forgetting His overflowing favor and generosity.

It will only make you more distant from Him, and all that you will acquire with the passing of the days is alienation. There are two sorts of remembrance: sincere remembrance with which the heart is in harmony, and remembrance which arises through banishing any remembrance of other than Allah (SWT).

As the Messenger of Allah said, 'I cannot do justice in properly praising You as You praise Yourself.' The Messenger of Allah did not set any limit on remembering Allah (SWT), since he knew the truth that Allah (SWT)'s remembrance of His bondsman was greater than the bondsman's remembrance of Him. Thus it is even more fitting that whoever comes after the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) should not set any limits, and whoever wants to remember Allah (SWT) should know that as long as Allah (SWT) does not remember the bondsman by granting him success in remembering Him, that bondsman will not be able to remember Him.

The Ruin of the Reciters

Someone who recites without knowledge is like a vain man who has neither property nor wealth; for people do not hate someone for his lack of possessions, but they detest him for his vanity. He is always at odds with creation in that which is not obligatory upon him, and he who contests creation in what he is not commanded to do is contesting the process of creativity and absolute lordship.

As Allah (SWT) said,

﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ مُّنِيرٍ﴾

Among men is he who disputes in respect of Allah though having no knowledge, nor guidance, nor a book giving light. (Q. 31:20)

None will have a harsher punishment than someone who claims a right to the mantle of knowledge without having either the truth or the meaning of it. Zayd ibn Thabit said to his son, 'My son, do not

let Allah (SWT) see your name in the register of the vain reciters.' And the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'A time will come for my community in which hearing the name of the man who recites will be considered better than studying, and studying will be considered better than doing the thing with experience ... The greatest number of hypocrites in my community are among the reciters of the Qur'an.' Be where the faith recommends you to be, and where you are commanded to be. Conceal your inner state from other people as much as you can. Make your acts of obedience to Allah (SWT) have the same relationship as your soul has to your body, so they become an indication of the state you have attained between yourself and your Originator. Seek Allah (SWT)'s help in all your affairs, and beseech Allah (SWT) humbly at the end of the night and at the end of the day. Allah (SWT) said,

ادْعُواْ رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً إِنَّهُ لاَ يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

Call on your Lord humbly and secretly; surely He does not love those who exceed the limits. (Q. 7:55)

Transgressing is one of the attributes, indeed, one of the hallmarks, of the reciters of our time. Be fearful of Allah (SWT) in all your affairs, so that you do not fall into the arena of desire and destroy yourself.

Clarification of Truth and Falsehood

Fear Allah (SWT) and be where you wish to be among any people you choose to be. There is no conflict for anyone in a state of precaution. Precaution is desirable for all parties; in it is gathered all goodness and maturity. It is the measure of all knowledge and wisdom, of every accepted act of obedience. Precaution is the water which gushes out from the spring of Allah (SWT)'s gnosis: every branch of knowledge is in need of it. It does not need any confirmation of knowing how to be still in awe of Allah (SWT) and His power. Increase in precaution comes from Allah (SWT)'s acquainting His bondman's secret with His subtle mercy: this is the root of every truth.

Falsehood is whatever cuts you off from Allah (SWT)- every group agrees on this also. Therefore avoid falsehood, devoting your secret to Allah (SWT) without any attachment.

The Messenger of Allah said, 'The truest words that the Bedouins spoke are the words of Labid when he said, Indeed everything but Allah is false And every blessing is most certainly ephemeral.' So cling to what is agreed upon by people of purity, piety and precaution in the roots of the faith, the realities of certainty, Allah (SWT)'s pleasure, and submission. Do not enter into disagreement and disputations among people, for then things will become difficult for you. The chosen community has agreed that Allah (SWT) is One and that there is nothing like Him; and that He is just in His judgment, does whatever He wishes, and governs what He wills. One does not ask 'why?' about anything of His making There has not been and will never be anything that is not according to His will and desire; He has the power to do what He wills, and He is true in His promise and His threat.

The Qur'an is His word, and it existed before phenomenal being, place and time. The creation of phenomenal beings and their annihilation are the same with Him: their creation did not increase His knowledge, nor will their passing decrease His kingdom. His power is mighty and He is majestic, glory be to Him.

If someone brings to you anything which falls short of this fundamental truth, do not accept it. Devote your inward being to that and you will see its blessings close at hand. You will be among the victors.

The Gnosis of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) Allah (SWT) has provided His Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) from the treasures of His subtlety, generosity, and mercy. He has taught them from the wealth of His knowledge, and He has singled them out for Himself from among all creation. No one from the entire creation possesses a state or character similar to theirs, for He has made them the means for all creatures to come to Him.

He made obedience to and love for them the cause of His contentment, and opposition to them and rejection of them a cause

for His wrath. He commanded all peoples and groups to follow the religion of their Messenger, rejecting any obedience other than by means of obedience to them, praise of them, recognition of their love, respect and veneration for them, esteem for them and deference to them, and rank with Allah (SWT).

Therefore glorify all the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) of Allah (SWT), and do not place them in the same position as anyone inferior to them. Do not exercise your intellect regarding their stations, states, and character unless it is by a precise clarification from Allah (SWT), and a consensus of the people who have insight into the proofs which affirm their virtues and ranks. How can you arrive at the reality of what they have from Allah (SWT)? If you compare their words and actions with any of the people below them, you will be a bad companion to them; you will have disclaimed their gnosis in ignorance of their being specially selected by Allah (SWT), and you will have dropped below the level of the truths of belief and gnosis. So take care, and take care again.

The Recognition of the Imams (peace be upon them)

It is related with a sound chain of authority from Salman al-Farsi, ' I visited the Messenger of Allah who looked at me and said, ' "O Salman, Allah (SWT) does not send a Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) or messenger unless there are with him twelve chiefs." ' "O Messenger of Allah, I know this from the people of the two books." '"O Salman, do you know my twelve chiefs, whom Allah (SWT) has chosen to be leaders after me?"

"Allah (SWT) and His Messenger know best."

"O Salman, Allah (SWT) created me from the quintessence of light, and called me, so I obeyed Him. Then He created 'Ali (peace be upon him) from my light, and called him, and he obeyed. From my light and the light of 'Ali (peace be upon him) He created Fatimah (peace be upon him): He called her and she obeyed. From me, 'Ali (peace be upon him) and Fatimah (peace be upon him), He created al-Hasan (peace be upon him) and al-Husayn (peace be upon him). He called them and they obeyed Him. Allah (SWT) has named us with five of His names: Allah (SWT) is al-Mahmud (the Praised) and

I am Muhammad (worthy of praise); Allah (SWT) is al-'Ali (peace be upon him) (the High), and this is 'Ali (peace be upon him) (the one of high rank); Allah (SWT) is al-Fatir (Creator out of nothing), and this is Fatimah (peace be upon him); Allah (SWT) is the One with Hasan (beneficence), and this is Hasan; Allah (SWT) is Muhassin (the Beautiful), and this is Husayn. He created nine Imams (peace be upon him) from the light of al-Husayn (peace be upon him) and called them and they obeyed Him, before Allah (SWT) created either Heaven on high, the out-stretched earth, the air, the angels or man. We were lights who glorified Him, listened to Him and obeyed Him."

"O Messenger of Allah, may my father and mother be your ransom! What is there for the person who recognizes these men as they should be recognized?"

"O Salman, whoever recognizes them as they should be recognized, and follows their example, befriends them and is free of their enemies, by Allah (SWT)! he is one of us. He will return to where we return, and he will be where we are!"

"O Messenger of Allah, is there belief without knowing their names and lineage?" "No, Salman."

"Messenger of Allah, where will I find them?" "You already know al-Husayn (peace be upon him); then there will be the master of the worshippers, 'Ali (peace be upon him) ibn Husayn (Zayn al-'Abidin); then his son Muhammad ibn 'Ali (peace be upon him), the piercer of the knowledge of the early and the later Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family)s and messengers (al-Baqir); then Ja'far ibn Muhammad, the truthful tongue of Allah (SWT) (al-Sadiq); then Musa ibn Ja'far, the one who kept his rage silent through patience in Allah (SWT) (al-Kathim); then 'Ali (peace be upon him) ibn Musa, pleased with the secret of Allah (SWT) (al-Rida '); then Muhammad ibn 'Ali (peace be upon him), the chosen one from the creatures of Allah (SWT) (al-MukAtar); then 'Ali (peace be upon him) ibn Muhammad, the guide to Allah (SWT) (al-Hadi); then al-Hasan (peace be upon him), son of 'Ali (peace be upon him), the silent, trustworthy guardian over the secret of Allah (SWT) (al-'Askari); then mim ha' mim dal (Muhammad), called Ibn

al-Hasan (peace be upon him), the announcer who establishes the right of Allah (SWT)."

Salman said, 'I wept. Then I continued, ' "O Messenger of Allah, let my life be deferred until their time! "

'He said, "O Salman, recite this:

فَإِذَا جَاء وَعْدُ أُولاهُمَا بَعَثْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ عِبَادًا لَّنَا أُوْلِي بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ فَجَاسُواْ خِلاَلَ الدِّيَارِ وَكَانَ وَعْدًا مَّفْعُولاً. ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكَرَّةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَمْدَدْنَاكُم بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ أَكْثَرَ نَفِيرًا

When the promise for the first of the two came, We sent over you our servants of mighty prowess, so they went to and from among the houses, and it was a promise to be accomplished. Then We gave you back the turn to prevail against them, and aided you with wealth and children and made you a numerous band. (Q. 17:5-6)

"I wept a lot," said Salman, "and my yearning became intense. I said, ' "O Messenger of Allah, is it a pledge from you?"

"Yes, by the One Who sent me and entrusted me with the Message; it is a pledge from me and from 'Ali (peace be upon him), Fatimah, al-Hasan (peace be upon him), al-Husayn (peace be upon him), and the nine Imams (peace be upon him) descended from the children of al-Husayn (peace be upon him), to you and those who are with us, and those of us who are wronged. Whoever is truly sincere in his belief, then by Allah (SWT), Salman, let Iblis and his armies come. Whoever has pure disbelief will be punished by retaliation, torture and inheritance (i.e. by others rather than them). Your Lord will not wrong anyone. It is we who are indicated in this verse:

وَنُرِيدُ أَن نَّمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعِفُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ. وَنُمَكِّنَ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنُرِي فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا مِنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا يَحْذَرُونَ

We desired to bestow a favor upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the leaders, and to make them the heirs, and to grant them power in the land, and to make Pharoah, Haman and their armies see from them what they feared." (Q. 28:5-6)

Salman said, 'I took leave of the Messenger of Allah, completely unconcerned as to how Salman would meet death, or how death would meet him.'"

SECTION 8

Recognition of the Companions

Do not forsake certainty for doubt, and what is clear for what is hidden. Do not pass judgment on what you cannot see because of something you are told about it. Allah (SWT) despises slander and bad opinion of your believing brothers? What then does He think of boldness in attributing a false statement, false belief or lie to the Companions of the Messenger of Allah?

As He said,

﴿ إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَتَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُم مَّا لَيْسَ لَكُم بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّنًا وَهُوَ عِندَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ ﴾

When you welcomed it with your tongues, and spoke with your mouths that which you had no knowledge of, and you deemed it an easy matter while with Allah it was grievous. (Q. 24:15)

As long as you can find a way to speak well and act well of people whether or not they are Decent. Do not do anything else.

Allah (SWT) said,

﴿ وَقُولُواْ لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا ﴾

Speak to men good words. (Q. 2:83)

Know that Allah (SWT) chose companions for His Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), honored them with the noblest mark of honor and robed them in the robe of support, victory and the correct keeping of his company in desirable and undesirable situations. He made the tongue of His Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) speak about their virtues, excellent qualities and marks of honor; so believe in their love, mention their excellence, and beware of the company of people of innovation, for it will make disbelief and clear loss grow in the heart. If the

excellence of some of them is not clear to you, then leave them to the Knower of the Unseen, and say, 'O Allah (SWT), I love anyone You and Your Messenger love, and I hate anyone You and Your Messenger hate.' There is no obligation beyond that.

The Honor and Sanctity of the Believers

No one respects the honor of the believers except the person who respects the honor and sacred claim of Allah (SWT) over the believers. The person who best fulfils this sacred claim with respect to Allah (SWT) and His Messenger is he who is the most particular in his respect for the believers' claim to honor. Whoever thinks little of the believers' honor has rent apart the raiment of his belief.

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'Part of esteem for Allah (SWT) is to respect those who are near to Allah in belief.' And again, 'Whoever is not merciful to a young person nor respectful to an old person is not one of us. Do not call a Muslim an unbeliever when repentance can make up for it, unless he is someone that Allah (SWT) has mentioned in His Book.'

Allah (SWT) said,

﴿ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّرْكِ الأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا ﴾

The hypocrites are in the lowest level of the Fire. (Q. 4:145)

Occupy yourself with your business about which you will be questioned.

Dutifulness to Parents

Dutifulness to one's parents comes from the bondsman's correct knowledge of Allah (SWT), since there is no act of worship which will bring the person performing it more quickly to the pleasure of Allah (SWT) than being dutiful to believing parents for the sake of Allah (SWT) This is because the right of the parents is derived from the right of Allah (SWT), as long as they are both on the path of the faith and the sunnah, and do not prevent a child from obeying Allah (SWT) for the sake of obedience to them, or move him from certainty to doubt, or from abstinence to the desires of this world, or call him to anything which is in opposition to faith and the

sunnah. If the situation is like that, then it is an act of obedience to rebel against them, and an act of rebellion to obey them. Allah (SWT) said,

وَإِن جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَى أَن تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبْهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

If they contend with you that you should associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, do not obey them. Keep company with them kindly in this world, but follow the way of him who turns to Me, then to Me is your return! (Q. 31:15)

As far as companionship is concerned, keep their company and be gentle with them. Endure their hardship just as they endured yours when you were young, and do not withhold from them that which Allah (SWT) has made plentiful for you in the way of food and clothes. Do not turn your face away from them nor raise your voice above theirs. To respect them is part of Allah (SWT)'s command; speak to them in the best possible way and be kind to them. Allah (SWT) will not let the reward of those who do good go to waste.

SECTION 9

Humility

Humility embraces every precious and noble rank and high position. If humility had a language which people understood, it would speak about the realities which are hidden in the outcomes of affairs. Humility is whatever is undertaken for Allah (SWT) and in Allah (SWT), and anything other then that is trickery. Whoever is humble to Allah (SWT), Allah (SWT) will honor over many of His bondsmen. The people of humility have recognizable signs. When one of them was asked about humility, he said, 'It means you are humble to the truth and follow it, even if you hear it from a child.' Many types of pride keep one from using, accepting and following knowledge. There are certain verses about this, denouncing the haughty. The people of humility have signs recognized by the angels in heaven and the Gnostics on earth. Allah (SWT) said,

وَبَيْنَهُمَا حِجَابٌ وَعَلَى الأَعْرَافِ رِجَالٌ يَعْرِفُونَ كُلاًّ بِسِيمَاهُمْ

On the most elevated places there shall be men who know all by their marks. (Q. 7:46) and elsewhere,

أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى عَن دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ مَن يَرْتَدَّ مِنكُمْ... ...الْكَافِرِينَ

Whoever from among you turns back from his faith, then Allah will bring a people whom He loves and they shall love Him, humble towards the believers, mighty against the unbelievers. (Q. 5:54)

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِندَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ

Surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you with the greatest precaution. (Q. 49:13) and Do not attribute purity to your souls. (Q. 53:32)

The root of humility comes from the majesty, awe, and immensity of Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) is not pleased with any act of worship, nor does He accept it unless it comes with humility. No one knows what is the true meaning of humility except those of His bondsmen who are close and connected with His unity. Allah (SWT) said, The servants of the Merciful are they who walk on earth in humbleness, and when the ignorant address them, they say; Peace. (25:63) He commanded the mightiest of His creation and the master of its people, Mu¦ammad, to be humble, saying,

...وَاخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

Make yourself gentle to the believers. (Q. 15:88)

From humility grow submission, humility, fear and modesty; it is only from within humility that these qualities appear. True and perfect nobility is only given to those who are humble in the essence of Allah (SWT).

Ignorance

Ignorance is a form whose composition is of this world. When it advances, there is darkness; when it retreats, there is light. The bondsman vacillates with it as shadows vacillate with the sun. Have you not looked at man? Sometimes you find that he is ignorant of his own qualities and praises them, while he recognizes their faults

in others and criticizes them. At other times you find that a person knows his own nature and criticizes it, while praising the same in others. He vacillates between protection and disappointment. If he encounters integrity and protection, he is correct. If he encounters lack of assistance and desertion, he errs. The key to ignorance is being satisfied with the knowledge one possesses, and placing all one's trust in it. The key to knowledge is the desire to exchange one level of knowledge for a higher level, together with divine grace and guidance. The lowest quality of an ignorant man is that he lays claim to knowledge which he does not deserve; his most common characteristic is ignorance of his own ignorance, and the most extreme aspect of his ignorance is to reject knowledge. There is nothing whose affirmation is the reality of its negation other that worldly ignorance and greed. All ignorant people are alike.

Eating

A little food is praiseworthy in every case and with all people, because it is salutary for the outer and the inner being. Eating is praiseworthy when done out of necessity, as a means and provision, at a time of plenty, or for nourishment. Eating out of necessity is for the pure; eating as a means and provision is a support for the precautious; eating at a time of plenty is for those who trust; and eating for nourishment is for believers.

There is nothing more harmful to the believer's heart than having too much food, for it brings about two things; hardness of heart and arousal of desires. Hunger is a condiment for believers, nourishment for the spirit, food for the heart, and health for the body. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'The son of Adam fills no worse vessel than his belly.'

David said, 'Leaving a morsel of food that I need is preferable to me than staying up for twenty nights.'

The Messenger of Allah said, 'The believer eats to fill one stomach, and the hypocrite seven.' And elsewhere, 'Woe to people who are swollen in two places!' When he was asked what they were, he replied, 'The stomach and the genitals.'

'Isa (peace be upon him) said, 'The heart does not have any worse disease than hardness, and no soul has been more weakened than

by lack of hunger. They are two halters of banishment and disappointment.

Evil Whispering

Satan can get control over Allah (SWT)'s servants only by whispering to them when they have abandoned their remembrance of Allah (SWT), become disdainful, feel complacent when faced with His prohibition, and forget that Allah (SWT) sees their secret. Whispering is what comes from outside the heart by tacit permission of the intellect, and is sustained by man's own nature; once it becomes established in the heart, there is error, misguidance, and disbelief. Allah (SWT) called on His bondsmen with His subtle call and told them about the enmity of Iblis: Shaytan is an enemy to you, so take him as an enemy. (35:6)

Be with him like a man who, standing near the shepherd's dog, has recourse to the dog's master in order to keep the dog away from him. It is the same when Satan comes to whisper to you, to lead you off the true path and make you forget to remember Allah (SWT).

Then seek refuge from him with your Lord and his Lord. He will defend the truth against falsehood, and help wronged ones, since He says, Surely he has no authority over those who believe and who rely on their Lord. (16:99) Man will only be able to do this if he knows how he comes, and can recognize his methods of whispering, by constant watchfulness, sincerity in the arena of service, awe of the All-Aware, and increased remembrance of Him.

However, anyone who neglects to spend his time in awareness must undoubtedly be the prey of Satan. He should draw a lesson from what Satan does with such a person's self: he leads it to misguidance, deception and haughtiness by duping the person into admiring his own actions, his worship, and his insight.

Satan's insolent behavior towards him causes a curse to descend on his knowledge, his gnosis and faculty of reasoning for all eternity; yet he has no power over those who are not negligent. Therefore hold to the firmest rope of Allah (SWT), which means seeking refuge with Allah (SWT), and having a sound need of Allah (SWT) at every breath. Do not be deceived when Satan makes your

acts of obedience appear beautiful in your eye: if he opens ninety-nine doors of goodness for you, it is only so that he may overcome you by opening the hundredth. So meet him with opposition, block his path and reject his charm.

SECTION 10

Pride

The concept of pride embraces all those aspects of vanity found in those who are proud of their actions, little knowing what their end will be. Whoever is proud of himself and his actions has strayed off the path of right guidance and has claimed what is not his.

Anyone who claims something to which he has no right is a liar, even if he conceals his claim for a long time. The first thing which happens to the proud man is that he is stripped of his object of pride, so that he will know that he is contemptible and incapable, and will testify against himself; and that will be a firmer proof against him. This was the case with Iblis.

Pride is a plant whose seed is disbelief, whose earth is hypocrisy, and whose water is transgression. Its branches are ignorance, its leaves are misguidance, and its fruit is being cursed to remain in the Fire forever. Whoever chooses pride has sowed disbelief and cultivated hypocrisy. It is inevitable that it must bear its fruit and he will end up in the Fire.

Generosity

Generosity is part of the nature of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), and the buttress of belief. A person cannot be a believer unless he is also generous; he must also have certainty and high aspiration (himmah), because generosity is a ray of the light of certainty. Effort is easy for him who knows his objective.

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'The friend of Allah (SWT) is but naturally disposed to generosity.'

Generosity is bestowed upon everyone beloved of Allah (SWT) who has little of this world. One of the signs of generosity is a lack of concern with the wealth of this world, and with whoever owns it, believing or unbelieving, obedient or rebellious, noble or low. The generous man feeds others while he himself is hungry; he clothes others while he is naked; he gives to others while he refuses to accept the gifts of others. He is favored by that, and does not indebt others by his graciousness. If he were to possess the entire world, he would see himself merely as an alien in it. If he spent it all for Allah (SWT) in a single hour, it would not be irksome for him.

The Messenger of Allah said, 'The generous person is near to Allah (SWT), near to people, near to the Garden and far from the Fire. The miser, however, is far from Allah (SWT), far from people, far from the Garden and near to the Fire.' The only person who can be called generous is the one who expends himself to obey Allah (SWT) and for the sake of Allah (SWT), even if it is only by a loaf of bread or a drink of water.

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) also said, 'The person who is generous is generous with what he owns, and through it desires the face of Allah (SWT). As for that person who pretends to be generous and rebels against Allah (SWT), he is the recipient of Allah (SWT)'s wrath and anger. He is the most miserly of people towards himself, so how must he be with other people, when he follows his own passion and opposes the command of Allah (SWT)?' As Allah (SWT) said,

﴿وَلَيَحْمِلُنَّ أَثْقَالَهُمْ وَأَثْقَالًا مَّعَ أَثْقَالِهِمْ﴾

Most certainly they shall carry their own burdens, and other burdens along with their own burdens. (Q. 29:13)

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'The son of Adam cries out, "My property! My property! My wealth! My wealth!" O Wretch! Where were you when there was the Kingdom, and you were not? Is there anything more than what you eat and consume, or what you wear and wear out, or what you give in charity and what you make last?' Either you are shown mercy by it or you are punished for it; therefore use your intelligence, and

understand that you should not love the property of others more than your own.

The Commander of the Faithful said, 'What you have already given was destined for those who now own it; what you have held back is for those who will inherit it, and what you have now you have no power over, except to become arrogant by it. How much you strive to seek this world and to make claims! Do you wish to impoverish yourself and enrich others?'

Self-reckoning

If there were nothing to make a person turn to self-reckoning (hisab) other than shame at being presented before Allah (SWT) and the disgrace of having the veil torn away from his secrets, man would throw himself from the mountaintops and not seek refuge in a building, nor eat, nor drink, nor sleep, except when necessary for preserving his life. This is how a person behaves when he sees the Resurrection, with all its terrors and hardships, with every breath he takes. In his heart he looks at the time when he will stand before the Compelling One, and when he takes account of himself it is as if he were being summoned to that presentation before Allah (SWT), and is being questioned in his death-throes.

Allah (SWT) said,

﴿وَإِن كَانَ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِّنْ خَرْدَلٍ أَتَيْنَا بِهَا وَكَفَى بِنَا حَاسِبِينَ﴾

Even though there be the weight of a mustard seed, yet will We bring it and sufficient are We to take account. (Q. 21:47) One of the Imams (peace be upon him) said, 'Take reckoning from yourselves before you are called to reckoning. Weigh your actions with the scale of your own fear of shame, before they are weighed for you.'

Abu Dharr said, 'The mention of the Garden is death, and so is the mention of the Fire. What a wonder that a person's self lives between two deaths!'

It is related that John the Baptist (peace be upon him) used to reflect for the entire night on the Garden and the Fire, so that his night was spent in wakefulness and he did not sleep. Then in the

morning he would say, 'O Allah (SWT); whither can one flee? Where can one stay? O Allah (SWT), one can only flee to You.'

SECTION 11

Opening the Prayer

When you face the qiblah, you should despair of this world, what it contains of creation and what others are occupied with. Empty your heart of every preoccupation which might distract you from Allah (SWT). See the immensity of Allah (SWT) with your innermost being, and remember that you will stand before Him. For Allah (SWT) has said, There shall every soul become acquainted with what it sent before, and they shall be brought back to Allah, their true Patron. (10:30)

Stand at the foot of fear and hope. When you recite the takbir, you should belittle what is between the high heavens and the moist earth, which are all below His glory, for when Allah (SWT) looks into the heart of His bondsman while he is saying the takbir, and sees in his heart something obstructing the truth of his declaring that Allah (SWT) is great, He says, 'O liar! do you try to deceive Me? By My might and My majesty, I will deny you the sweetness of My remembrance, and I will veil you from My nearness and from joy in My intimate communion.'

Know that Allah (SWT) does not need your service. He is independent of you, your worship and your supplication. He summons you by His favor to show you mercy, to put you far from His punishment, to spread some of the blessings of His kindness over you, to guide you to the path of His pleasure, and to open to you the door of His forgiveness. If Allah (SWT) had created what He created in the universe many times over, forever without end, it would still be the same to Allah (SWT) whether they all rejected Him or united with Him. All that He has from the worship of creatures is the display of His generosity and power. Therefore make modesty your cloak and incapacity your shawl. Enter under the throne of the power of Allah (SWT), and you will capture the benefits of His lordship, seeking help in Him and asking for His successor.

Bowing in Prayer

The bondsman of Allah (SWT) does not truly bow (in ruku') but that Allah (SWT) adorns him with the light of His radiance, shades him in the shade of His greatness and clothes him in the garment of His purity. Bowing is first and prostration (sujud) is second: there is courtesy in bowing, and in prostration nearness to Allah (SWT). Whoever is not good in the courtesy is not fit for nearness; therefore bow with the ruku' of one who is humble to Allah (SWT), abased in his heart and fearful under His power, submitting his limbs to Allah (SWT) like one who is fearful and sorrowful for what he might miss of the benefits of those who bow.

It is related that Rabi' ibn Khuthaym used to stay awake all night until dawn, in a single raku'. In the morning he would sigh and say, 'Oh! The sincere have gone ahead, and we are cut off!' Make your ruku' properly by keeping your back straight, coming down from your aspirations in standing to serve Him which comes only with His help. Let your heart flee from the whisperings, tricks and deceit of Satan. Allah (SWT) will elevate His bondsmen according to their humility to Him, and will guide them to the roots of humility, submission and abasement according to how well their innermost being is acquainted with His immensity.

Prostration in Prayer

A person who performs true prostration (sujud) does not lose Allah (SWT) at all, even if it is done only once in his entire life; but the man who deserts his Lord in that state does not prosper. He is like someone who deceives himself, neglecting and forgetting the immediate joy and the ease after this life which Allah (SWT) has prepared for those who prostrate themselves.

The person who does well in his prostration is never far from Allah (SWT); while the person who shows ill-courtesy and neglects to honor Him because his heart is attached to something other than Allah (SWT) in the state of prostration will never come near to Him. Therefore prostrate yourself with the prostration of someone abased, who knows that he is created from the earth on which

people tread, that he is fashioned from sperm which everyone finds impure, and that he was given being when he did not exist. Allah (SWT) made prostration the occasion to draw near to Him in one's heart, innermost being and spirit.

Whoever draws near to Him is far from all that is other than Him. Do you not see that in its outward appearance the state of prostrations is not complete except by disappearing from all things and being veiled from all that the eyes see? Thus does Allah (SWT) want the inward being to be. If someone's heart is attached to something other than Allah (SWT) in prayer, he is near to that thing, and far from the reality of what Allah (SWT) desires in His prayer. For He has said, Allah has not made for any man two hearts in his breast. (33:4)

In the words of the Messenger of Allah: 'Almighty Allah (SWT) said, When I look on the heart of a bondsman, I know if he has sincere love and obedience for My sake and seeks My pleasure in it. Then I take charge of him and draw near to him. Whoever is occupied with other-than-Me in his prayer is one of those who mocks himself, and his name is recorded in the register of the losers.

The Tashahhud

The tashahhud ' is praise of Allah (SWT). Be a slave to Him in your innermost being, fearful and humble to Him in action as you are His bondsman by word and claim. Join the truthfulness of your tongue to the pure truthfulness of your innermost being.

He created you a slave and commanded you to worship Him with your heart, your tongue and your limbs. Realise your enslavement to Him by His lordship over you. Know that the forelocks of creation are all in His hand. Creatures possess neither breath nor sight except by His power and will: they are incapable of bringing forth the least thing in His kingdom, unless it is by His permission and will. Allah (SWT) said,

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاء وَيَخْتَارُ مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

Your Lord creates and chooses whom he pleases; to choose is not theirs. Glory be to Allah (SWT), and exalted be He above what they associate [with Him]. (Q. 28:68)

Therefore be a slave to Allah (SWT), remembering Him by speech and proclamations, and join the truthfulness of your tongue to the purity of your innermost being, for He created you. He is too mighty and majestic for anyone to have will or volition except by His earlier will and volition. Fulfill the state of enslavement by being content with His wisdom, and by worshipping in order to carry out His commands.

He commanded you to send blessings upon His beloved Muhammad, may Allah (SWT) bless him and his family and grant them peace. Therefore join your prayer to Muhammad with your prayer to Allah (SWT), obedience to Muhammad to obedience to Allah (SWT), and your witnessing of Muhammad to your witnessing of Allah (SWT). Watch out that you do not miss the blessings of knowledge which are contained in one's respect for his sanctity, with the result that you are denied the benefits of the prayer on him. Allah (SWT) commanded him to ask for forgiveness for you, and to intercede for you when you perform what is obligatory in the command and prohibition, and in the sunnah and courtesies (adab) demonstrated to man through the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family). You should know the majesty of his rank with Allah (SWT).

Salam

The meaning of the taslim (greeting of peace) at the end of the prayer means security, that is, anyone who carries out the command of Allah (SWT) and the sunnah of His Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) out of humility to Him and showing fear, has security from the tribulations of this world and freedom from the punishment of the next world. Al-Salam (peace) is one of the names of Allah (SWT), Which He entrusted to His creation so that they would make use of it in their Behavior, trusts, and contracts; in confirming their companies and assemblies; and for the soundness of their social relations.

If you want to establish this salam in its proper place, and to fulfill its meaning, then fear Allah (SWT); and make your faith, your heart, and your intellect sound. Do not sully them by the injustice of acts of rebellion. Let your guardians be safe from you; do not weary, or bore or alienate them through your bad behavior towards them, nor with your friend, nor with your enemy. If those who are close to someone are not safe from him, then those furthest from him are safest. Anyone who does not establish salam on the occasions when it should be established has no peace and no submission: he is a liar in his salam, even if he uses it as a form of greeting among people.

Know that man's existence lies between trials and afflictions in this world. Allah (SWT) may test him with blessings, to see his thankfulness, or with hardship, to see if he will show steadfastness and nobility by obeying Him, or disgrace in rebelling against Him, although there is no way to reach His good pleasure and mercy except through His grace. The only means to obey Him is when he grants success: none can intercede with Him except with His permission and mercy.

SECTION 12

Repentance

Repentance is the rope of Allah (SWT), and the mainstay of His concern for His servants, who must always show repentance, in every state. Each group of bondsmen has its own form of repentance: the repentance of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family)s is for the disquiet caused to their innermost being by any outward source of vexation, while the repentance of the awliya' (friends of Allah (SWT)) arises from the subtle change of hue in their thoughts. The repentance of the pure lies in their calm abandonment of whatever oppresses them; the repentance of the elite is for being occupied with anything other than Allah (SWT), and the repentance of the common people is for wrong actions. Each of them recognizes and is aware of the cause of his repentance, and his intention therein, but it would take too long to explain all of these here.

As for the repentance of the common man, he washes his inward being with the water of regret, in constant recognition of his wrong action, having regret for what he has done, and fear for what remains of his life. He does not think that his wrong actions are insignificant, for that would lead him to laziness; his continued weeping and regret for what he has missed is in itself an act of worship. He should restrain himself from his worldly appetites, and seek Allah (SWT)'s help in showing repentance, and to protect him from returning to what he did before. He trains himself in the arena of ignorance and worship. He makes up for obligations missed: he answers others' calls for help, withdraws from bad company, spends his night awake, thirsts during the day, constantly reflecting on his end and seeking help from Allah (SWT), asking Him to make him steady in his states of ease and difficulty, and constant in his trials and afflictions so that he will not fall from the ranks of the repentant. This will purify him of his wrong actions, increase his knowledge, and elevate his rank. As Allah (SWT) has said,

فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ

Thus Allah will certainly know those who are truthful, and Allah will certainly know the liars. (Q. 29:3)

Retreat

Anyone who embarks on a retreat ('uzlah) from the world is fortified by Allah (SWT) and protected by His guardianship. What joy there is for the person who has withdrawn with Him, secretly and openly! To do this, he must differentiate between truth and falsehood, love poverty, chose hardship and abstinence, and seize every opportunity for retreat. He must contemplate the outcome of his actions, seeing his incapacity for worship while worshipping as much as possible, abandoning pride, and constantly engaging in remembrance without showing heedlessness, which is the hunting ground of Satan and the beginning of every affliction and the reason for all that is obscure. He should also rid his house of everything he has no immediate need for.

'Isa (peace be upon him) said, 'Guard your tongue in order to develop your heart, and make your abode be enough for you. Beware of showing off and of having excess provision. Be modest

before your Lord and weep for your errors. Flee from people as you flee from the lion and the viper. They were a medicine and now they have become a disease. Then meet Allah (SWT) wherever you will.' And Rabi' ibn Khuthaym said, 'If you can manage today to be in a place where you do not know anyone and where none knows you, then do so.'

Retreat brings protection for the limbs, a free heart, a sound livelihood, the destruction of Satan's weapons, the avoidance of every evil and rest for the heart. There is no Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) nor regent (wasi) who has not chosen retreat in his lifetime, either at his beginning or at his end.

Silence

Silence is the mark of those who are certain of the realities which have already come to be, and about which the Pen has already written. It is the key to every rest in this world and the next: it brings Allah (SWT)'s pleasure, a lightening of the reckoning and a protection from errors and mistakes. Allah (SWT) has made it a veil for the ignorant and an adornment for the man of knowledge.

Through silence, passions can be set aside, and with it come self-discipline, the sweetness of worship, removal of hard heartedness, abstinence, virtuousness and resourcefulness. Therefore lock your tongue to speech which is not absolutely necessary, especially when you do not find anyone worth talking to? except, that is, when you are talking specifically about matters to do with Allah (SWT). Rabi' ibn Khuthaym used to place a parchment before him, upon which he would write down everything he said during the day. In the evening he would call himself to account while he was still alive, seeing what he had said both for and against himself. Then he would say, 'Oh! The silent have indeed been saved!'

One of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah used to put pebbles in his mouth. When he wanted to say something he knew was both to Allah (SWT), in Allah (SWT) and for the sake of Allah (SWT), he would remove them from his mouth. Many of the Companions used to breathe like someone drowning, and speak like someone who was ill.

People's destruction or salvation lies in speech and silence Good fortune belongs to those who are given knowledge of what is incorrect and correct in speech, and the science of silence and its advantages, for it is one of the qualities of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and one of the distinguishing marks of the select. Whoever knows the value of speech is an expert in the company of silence: once a person has been exposed to the subtleties of silence, and has been entrusted with its treasures, then both his speech and silence are worship. No one is privy to this worship of his except the King of all, the All-compelling.

Intellect and Passion

The man of intellect submits to what is true and is just in his speech; he shrinks from what is false but opposes it in his speech. He leaves this world behind, but does not leave his faith. The proof of the man of intellect lies in two things: truthful words and correct actions. The man of intellect does not say something which the intellect rejects, neither does he expose himself to suspicion, nor abandon the help of those who have been tested. Knowledge guides him in his actions; gnosis is his certainty in the paths he treads, and forbearance is his companion at all times. Passion, however, is the enemy of the intellect, the opponent of truth and the companion of falsehood. The strength of passion comes from worldly appetites, and its initial manifestation is caused by doing what is forbidden, neglecting obligations, making light of the sunnah and engrossing oneself in amusements.

SECTION 13

Envy

An envious man harms himself before he harms the person he envies, as was the case with Iblis: by his envy he brought the curse upon himself, whereas to Adam he brought about his election, guidance, elevation to the true contract, and his being chosen. Therefore be envied rather than envious, because the punishment of the envious is always worse than that of the envied; thus is provision apportioned. So how does envying benefit the envious, and how does envy harm the envied? The root of envy lies in the blindness of the heart, and rejection of Allah (SWT)'s overflowing

favor: they are two wings of disbelief. Through envy the son of Adam falls into endless grief and is utterly destroyed, and there is no way he can save himself. The envious does not really repent, for he continues to dwell upon and believe in his envy; indeed it is such an inherent part of his nature that it manifests itself unopposed and without apparent reason, causing him harm. A person's basic nature does not change, even with treatment.

Greed

It is said that Ka'b al-Ahbar was questioned about what is soundest and what is most corrupt in faith. 'The soundest thing is scrupulousness and the most corrupt is greed,' he replied. Avarice is the wine of Satan, which he gives to his chosen ones with his own hand. Whoever becomes drunk upon it sobers up only in the pain of Allah (SWT)'s punishment in the proximity of the one who gave him the drink. If there were no other reason for Allah (SWT)'s wrath with respect to greed except man's preferring this world to faith, that would still be a sufficiently severe chastisement. Allah (SWT) said,

﴿أُوْلَـئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوُاْ الضَّلاَلَةَ بِالْهُدَى فَمَا رَبِحَت تِّجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُواْ مُهْتَدِينَ﴾

These are they who buy error for the price of right guidance, and chastisement for forgiveness. (Q. 2:16)

The Commander of the Faithful said, 'Be gracious to whoever you wish and you are his prince.

Seek help from whoever you like and you are his equal. Be in need of whoever you like and you are his prisoner.' He who is greedy is stripped of his belief without feeling it, for belief prevents the bondsman from being greedy in creation. He also says, 'My friend, the vaults of Allah (SWT) are full of marks of honor, and He does not neglect to reward of someone who acts well.' Whatever a person might possess is tarnished by defects. Belief makes him rely on trust, moderation, forsaking desire, clinging to the obedience of Allah (SWT), and despairing of people. If he does that, then he is keeping close to his belief and he has acted correctly. If he does not, belief parts company with him and leaves him to his bad nature.

Corruption

The corruption of the outward being, comes from the corruption of the inward. If you put your innermost being in order, Allah (SWT) will put your outward being in order; if you fear Allah (SWT) inwardly, He will not rend the veil publicly. But he who betrays Allah (SWT) inwardly, Allah (SWT) will expose in the open. The greatest corruption is born of prolonged expectation, greed, and pride, as Allah (SWT) told us in the story of Qarun when He said,

﴿وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفَسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ﴾

Do not seek to make mischief in the land; surely Allah does not love the corruptors. (Q. 28:77)

Elsewhere He said,

﴿تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾

[As for] that Future Abode, We assign it to those who have no desire to exalt themselves in the earth nor to make mischief; and the good end is for those who have precaution. (Q. 28:83) These defects come from what Qarun did and believed. The root of corruption lies in loving this world, amassing its wealth, following the self, elevating its appetites, loving praise, agreeing with Satan, and following his footsteps: all of these faults combine with a love of paying Allah (SWT) no heed and forgetting His favors. Therefore you should flee from people, reject this world, interrupt your rest, break with your normal habits, cut off the source of worldly appetites at the root by constantly remembering Allah (SWT) and clinging to obedience to Him, and enduring people's aversion, the over-dependence of a comrade, and hostile malice on the part of your family and relatives. If you do that, then the door of Allah (SWT)'s kindness will be opened to you, since He has good regard for you, as well as forgiveness and mercy. You will have left the company of the heedless and freed your heart from the captivity of Satan. You will come to the door of Allah (SWT) in the company of those who come to Him, and you will travel a path on which you may hope to be permitted to come to the Noble, the Magnanimous, the Generous, the Merciful.

Well-being

Seek well-being (salamah) from Allah (SWT) wherever you are in every state you may be in, for your faith, your heart, and the ultimate outcome of your affairs. He who seeks it does not always find it. How then, is it that there are some who expose themselves to affliction, travel the opposite path to well-being and oppose its principles, seeing safety as destruction and destruction as safety? Well-being has been taken away from people in every age, especially this one; yet it can be rediscovered through enduring antipathy and even injury from other people, through patience in the face of disaster, making light of death, fleeing from whatever is reprehensible and being content with a minimum of material possessions.

If you are not like that, then you must go into retreat. If you cannot do that then be silent, although silence is not the same as retreat. If you cannot be silent, then speak what will help you and not harm you; but that is not the same thing as silence. If you cannot find any way to do that, then move about by journeying from land to land,' casting your self (nafs) into the uncharted territories with a pure intention, humble heart, and steadfast body. Allah (SWT) said,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّاهُمُ الْمَلآئِكَةُ ظَالِمِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُواْ فِيمَ كُنتُمْ قَالُواْ كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الأَرْضِ قَالُوَاْ أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللّهِ وَاسِعَةً فَتُهَاجِرُواْ فِيهَا فَأُوْلَـئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءتْ مَصِيرًا

Surely, [as for] those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls, they shall say, "In what state were you?" They shall say, "We were oppressed in the land." They shall say, "Was not Allah's earth spacious so that you could have migrated therein?" (Q. 4:97)

Take whatever belongs to the rightly acting bondsmen of Allah (SWT). Do not struggle with obscure matters, nor contend with contradictions. If anyone tells you, 'I', say 'you'. Do not claim knowledge in anything, even if you are an expert in it. Uncover your secret only to one who is nobler in the faith than you, and thus you will find nobility. If you do this you will obtain wellbeing, and you will remain with Almighty without any connection to anything else.

SECTION 14

Worship

Persevere in performing the customs and obligations in worship ('ibadah), for they are the source: whoever obtains them and performs them properly has obtained everything. The best form of worship is that which comes nearest to security, this is the one most free of harm and the most consistent, be it ever so small. If you have performed your obligatory and supererogatory prayers, then you are a true worshipper. Beware of treading on the carpet of a king unless you do so with abasement, acknowledgement of need, fear, and respect. Make your movements free of showing off and your secret free of hardness.

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'The person who prays is conversing with his Lord.' So be embarrassed before the One Who is Cognizant of your secret, Who knows your conversation and what your conscience conceals. Be where He will see you doing what He wants you to do, and performing that to which He has summoned you. Those who have gone before us occupied themselves from the moment they completed one obligatory prayer to the moment they started another, so that they could perform both prayers sincerely and correctly. It seems that in our times it has become a virtue to leave the obligatory aside, which is like having a body without a soul. 'Ali (peace be upon him) ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) said, 'I wonder at a person who seeks something extra while he abandons an obligation; he only does so because he lacks recognition of the matter and respect for it. He does not see Allah (SWT)'s will in preparing people to obey His command and choosing that for them.'

Reflection

Reflect on what has passed of this world. Has any of it remained for anyone? Has anyone remained in it, be he noble or lowly, rich or poor, friend or enemy? Similarly, what has not yet happened of it resembles more closely that which has passed of it, than water resembles water. The Messenger of Allah said, 'Death is enough of a warner; the intellect is enough of a guide; precaution is enough

of a provision; worship is enough of an occupation; Allah (SWT) is sufficient as an intimate friend; the Qur'an is enough of a clarification.' And elsewhere, 'Only affliction and trial remain of this world. If a person is saved, it is only by sincerely seeking refuge.' And Noah said, 'I found this world to be like a house with two doors. I entered through one of them and went out through the other.' Such is the state of the one who was saved by Allah (SWT): so what is the state of one who feels at ease in this world, relies on it, wastes his life by cultivating it, and is full of worldly demands?

Reflection is the mirror of good deeds and the expiation of bad deeds. It is the light of the heart, and guarantees ease to other people and success in obtaining betterment for the Next Abode; it allows one to foresee the outcome of one's actions, and causes an increase in knowledge. Worship of Allah (SWT) is unparalleled when accompanied by this quality. The Messenger of Allah said, 'To reflect for an hour is better than worshipping for a year.' The station of reflection is only obtained by him whom Allah (SWT) has singled out for the light of gnosis (ma'rifah) and tawhid.

Rest

The believer only acquires true rest when he meets Allah (SWT), although rest may also be obtained by these four things: silence, by which you recognize the state of your heart and your self in your relations with your Creator; retreat, by which you are rescued from the evils of the age, outwardly and inwardly; hunger, which kills fleshly appetites and temptation; and wakefulness, which illuminates your heart, purifies your nature and cleanses your spirit. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'If a man finds himself in the morning tranquil in his heart, healthy in body and with food for the day, it is as if all of this world had been chosen for him'; and Wahb ibn Munabbih quoted the first and latter Holy Prophet (pbuh)’s as saying, 'O contentment, honor and riches are to be found with you. Whoever wins, wins through you!'

Abu al-Darda' said, 'What Allah (SWT) has allotted to me will not pass me by, even if it were on the wing of a breeze'; and Abu Dharr said, 'The secret of a man who does not trust his Lord is always exposed, even if it is imprisoned in solid rock.' No one is in a

greater state of loss, is viler, or lower than the person who does not believe what his Lord has guaranteed for him and allotted him before He created him. In spite of that, this person relies on his own strength, management, effort, and striving, and goes beyond the limits of his Lord by his seeking ways and means which Allah (SWT) has caused him to have no need of.

SECTION 15

Avarice

Do not covet anything avariciously; for if you ignore it, it will come to you anyway, if it is destined to be yours. Then you would find ease in your heart with Allah (SWT), praise for leaving it; but you will be blamed for your haste in seeking it, for not trusting Him, and for not being content with the decree. Allah (SWT) created this world the same as a shadow: when you chase it, it tires you out and you can never catch up with it. If you leave it alone, it follows you inexorably, and gives you no cause for fatigue. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'A covetous man is bereft; yet in spite of his deprivation, he is blamed wherever he is.' For how could he be other than bereft when he flees from the covenant of Allah (SWT), and opposes His words:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ رَزَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ

Allah is He Who created you, then gave you sustenance, then He causes you to die, then brings you life. (Q. 30:40)

The covetous person is in the midst of seven difficult evils: thinking, which harms his body but brings it no help; anxiety, which has no end; weariness, from which he will find rest only in death, although he has the greatest weariness when at rest; fear, which only makes him fall into what he fears; sorrow, which makes his livelihood disturbed without any benefit to him; reckoning, which will not save him from the punishment of Allah (SWT) unless He pardons him, and punishment, from which there is neither flight nor escape. The one who trusts in Allah (SWT) spends morning and evening in His protection and well-being. Allah (SWT) has hastened for him what suffices him, and prepared for him things which only

Allah (SWT) knows. Avarice is what flows out from Allah (SWT)'s anger. When the slave is not bereft of certainty, he is not covetous. Certainty is the earth of Islam and the heaven of iman. '

Clarification

The intimate conversation of the Gnostics possesses three roots: fear, hope and love. Fear is the branch of knowledge; hope is the branch of certainty, and love is the branch of gnosis (ma 'rifah) .The proof of fear is flight; the proof of hope is quest, and the proof of love is preferring the Beloved over all others. When knowledge is confirmed in truthfulness, he fears. When fear is genuine, he flees. When he flees, he is saved. When he sees the light of certainty in the heart, he sees overflowing favor.

When the vision of overflowing favor is firm, there is hope. When he feels the sweetness of belief in hope, he seeks. When he has success in the quest, he finds. When the light of gnosis is manifested in his heart, the breeze of love stirs, he settles in the shadow of the Beloved, prefers the Beloved over all others, follows His commands and avoids His prohibitions, and chooses them over everything else. When he perseveres towards intimacy with the Beloved while carrying out His commands and avoiding His prohibitions, he has reached the spirit of intimate communion and nearness.

These three roots are like the sanctuary, the mosque, and the Ka'bah: whoever enters the Sacred Precinct is safe from people. If a person enters the mosque, his senses are safe from being used in disobedience, and if a person enters the Ka'bah, his heart is safe from being occupied with anything other than the remembrance of Allah (SWT). Take heed, O believer! If you are in a state in which you are content to meet death, then thank Allah (SWT) for His grace and protection. If it is other than that, then move from it with sound resolution, and have regret for that part of your life which passed in heedlessness.

Seek Allah (SWT)'s help in purifying your outward nature of wrong actions and cleanse your inward being from faults. Cut the shackles of heedlessness from your heart, and extinguish the fire of desires in your soul.

Judgments

The heart may be described as belonging to one of four types: uplifted, open, low, or stopped. The raf' (uplifting) of the heart lies in remembrance of Allah (SWT); the fath (opening) of the heart lies in the pleasure of Allah (SWT); the khafd (lowering) of the heart lies in occupation with anything other than Allah (SWT), and the waqf (stopping) of the heart lies in paying no heed to anything other than Allah (SWT).'

Do you not see that when a servant remembers Allah (SWT) with sincere respect, every veil that was between him and Allah (SWT) is removed? If the heart obeys the source of Allah (SWT)'s decree and is content with that, then how do happiness, joy and worldly rest open up to him? When the heart is occupied with some of the matters of this world and its means, how, then, can it find what Allah (SWT) has mentioned? Then the heart becomes reduced and dark like an empty, ruined house which has neither prosperity nor occupant. When a person is distracted from remembering Allah (SWT), then you see that he is 'stopped' from advancing, and veiled. He has become obdurate and dark since leaving the light which issues from the servant's veneration of his Lord. The sign of raf' lies in agreement in every respect, lack of opposition, and constant yearning; the sign of it lies in trustful dependence on Allah (SWT), truthfulness and certainty; the sign of khafd lies in pride, showing off, and greed; and the sign of waqf lies in the departure of the sweetness of obedience, lack of the bitterness of rebellion, and of confusion in the knowledge of what is permitted and what is forbidden.

Siwak

The Messenger of Allah said, 'Using the siwak' purifies the mouth and is pleasing to the Lord,' and he made it one of the confirmed practices. It has benefits for both the outward and the inward being which even men of intelligence cannot count. As you remove the stains caused by food and drink from your teeth with the siwak, so remove the impurity of your wrong actions by humble entreaty, humility, night prayers, and asking for forgiveness before dawn. Purify your outer being from impurities, and your inner being from the turbidity of acts of opposition and committing anything

prohibited, all the while acting sincerely for Allah (SWT). The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) made its use an example for people for alertness and attention, in that the siwak is a clean, soft plant and the twig of a blessed tree. The teeth are what Allah (SWT) created in the mouth as a tool for eating, an implement for chewing, a reason for enjoying food and for keeping the intestines in order. The teeth are pure jewels, which become dirty because they are present when food is chewed, leading to a deterioration in the way the mouth smells, and decay in the gums. When the intelligent believer cleans with the soft plant and wipes it on these pure jewels, he removes the decay and adulteration from them and they then revert to their original state. Similarly Allah (SWT) created the heart pure and clean, and made its food remembrance, reflection, awe and respect. When the pure heart turns grey by being fed on heedlessness and vexation, it is polished by the burnish of repentance and cleaned by the water of regret, so that it reverts to its primal state and its basic essence. As Allah (SWT) said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

Surely Allah loves those who turn [in repentance] to Him, and He loves those who purify themselves. (Q. 2:222)

In recommending the use of the siwak the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) was advocating that it be used on the teeth themselves; but he also implied the meaning and example we have referred to above, that for anyone who empties his faculty of reflection for the purpose of drawing inward lessons from the outward examples with respect to both the principle and roots of faith. Allah (SWT) will open the springs of wisdom, and will give him still more of His overflowing favor, for Allah (SWT) does not neglect the reward of those who act well.

Using the Lavatory

The lavatory is called in Arabic 'the place of rest', because there people may find rest from the burden of impurities and empty themselves of grossness and filth. There the believer may reflect on how he is cleansing himself from the food and perishable matter of this world, and how his own death will come in like manner:

therefore he should find ease in avoiding the world, leaving it aside and freeing himself and his heart from its distractions. He should be averse to taking and gathering this world just as he loathes impurity, the lavatory and filth, reflecting on how something good in one state becomes so base in another. He knows that holding onto contentment and precaution will bring him ease in the two abodes. Thus ease comes from considering this world to be insignificant, giving up one's enjoyment of it, and removing the impurity of what is forbidden or doubtful. A person closes the door of pride on himself once he recognizes this; he flees from wrong actions and opens the door of humility, regret, and modesty. He strives to carry out Allah (SWT)'s commands and to avoid His prohibitions, seeking a good end and excellent proximity to Allah (SWT). He locks himself in the prison of fear, steadfastness, and the restraint of his appetites until he reaches the safety of Allah (SWT) in the world to come, and tastes the food of His good pleasure. If he intends that, everything else means nothing to him.

SECTION 16

Purification

If you seek purification and ablution (wudu'), then go to water as you would go to the mercy of Allah (SWT), for He has made water the key to being near to Him in intimate conversation, and a guide to the domain of His service. Just as the mercy of Allah (SWT) purifies the wrong actions of His bondsmen, so are outward impurities cleansed only by water. As Allah (SWT) said, It is He Who sends the winds as good news before His mercy; and We send down pure water out of heaven! (25:48) and elsewhere,

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

We have made of water everything living. Will they not then believe? (Q. 21:30)

As He gives life to every blessing in this world from water, so by His mercy and overflowing favor He gives life to the heart and to acts of obedience, and to reflection in the purity of water, its fineness, its cleanness, its blessing and the subtleness of how it

mixes with everything; through water He also gives life to the heart, when you purify those limbs which you have been commanded by Allah (SWT) to purify, and which you use to worship in your obligatory and customary prayers. From each limb come many benefits. When you treat the limbs with respect, then their benefits will soon spring up for you. Deal with Allah (SWT)'s creation like water which mixes with things and gives everything its due, while not changing itself in essence. This is expressed by the words of the Messenger of Allah, 'The sincere believer is like water.' Let your purity with Allah (SWT) in all your obedience be like the purity of water when He sent it down out of heaven and called it pure. Purify your heart with precaution and certainty when you purify your limbs with water.

Entering the Mosque

When you reach the door of the mosque, know that you have come to the door of a mighty King. Only the purified tread on His carpet, and only the true are allowed to sit with Him. So be alert in your approach of the court of the awesome King, for you are in great danger if you are heedless. Know that He can do whatever He wishes in justice and overflowing favor with you and by you. If He inclines to you with His mercy and overflowing favor, He has accepted a small amount of your obedience and has given you a great reward for it. If He demands His due of truthfulness and sincerity by His justice towards you, He has veiled you and rejected your obedience, even if you have had obedience in abundance. He does what He wills. Acknowledge your incapacity, inadequacy, fragility, and poverty before Him, for you have turned yourself to worshipping Him and being close to Him. Turn to Him, and know that neither the secret nor the revealed part of any creature is hidden from Him. Be like the poorest of His servants before Him: strip your heart of every occupation which might veil you from your Lord, for He only accepts the purest and most sincere. Look to see in which register your name will be written.

If you taste the sweetness of His intimate conversation and the pleasure of His addressing you, and drink the cup of His mercy, and those favors he has bestowed on you and those of your requests which He has accepted, then you have served Him properly, and may therefore enter the sphere of His permission and security. If

not, then stand as one whose power and ability have been cut off, and whose term has come to an end. If Almighty Allah (SWT) knows that in your heart you are sincerely seeking refuge with Him, He will regard you with compassion, mercy and kindness. He will cause you to succeed in that which He loves and which is pleasing to Him, for He is generous. He loves noble generosity and the worship of those who need Him, and who are burning up at His door seeking His good pleasure. Allah (SWT) said,

﴿أَمَّن يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ﴾

Who answers the distressed one when he calls upon Him, and removes the evil? (Q. 27:62)

Supplication

Observe the courtesy of supplication. Consider the One on whom you call, how you call on Him and why you call; affirm the immensity and magnificence of Allah (SWT). Look with your heart at how He knows what is in your conscience, how He sees your secret being and whatever has occurred and will occur in it, both true and false. Learn the paths to your salvation and destruction, so that you do not call upon Allah (SWT) for something which perhaps contains your destruction, but which you suppose to contain your salvation. Allah (SWT) said,

﴿وَيَدْعُ الإِنسَانُ بِالشَّرِّ دُعَاءهُ بِالْخَيْرِ وَكَانَ الإِنسَانُ عَجُولاً﴾

Man prays for evil as he ought to pray for good, and man is ever hasty. (Q. 17:11)

Reflect about what you ask for and why you are asking: supplication should be a total response to the Truth on your part, and a melting of the heart in contemplation of its Lord. It is to abandon all choices and to surrender all matters, both outward and inward, to Allah (SWT). If the preconditions of the supplication are not met, then do not look for fulfillment, for He knows what is secret and what is hidden; you might ask Him for something when He knows that you conceal the opposite of it. One of the companions said to the others, 'You are waiting for rain, and I am waiting for stones.' Know that if Allah (SWT) had not commanded us to call on Him, He would nevertheless have favored us with an

answer immediately after we finished the prayer? How, then, is His favor, given the fact that He has guaranteed that answer to whoever fulfils the conditions of the prayer? The Messenger of Allah was asked about the most powerful name of Allah (SWT): he said, 'Every name of Allah (SWT) is most powerful.' Free your heart from all that is other-than-Him, and call on Him by whatever name you like. In reality Allah (SWT) does not have one name rather than another: He is Allah (SWT), the One, the Almighty.

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'Allah (SWT) does not answer the supplication of a heedless heart.' When one of you wants His Lord to give to him whatever he asks of Him, he should renounce all people, putting his hope in Allah (SWT) alone. When Allah (SWT) sees that in his heart, He will give him whatever he asks. When you have established the preconditions of supplication which I have mentioned, and have become sincere in your innermost being for His sake, then rejoice in the good news that one of three things will happen: either He will hasten to give you what you have asked for, or He will store up something better for you, or He will avert from you an affliction which would have destroyed you had He sent it. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) reported that Allah (SWT) said, 'If anyone is distracted from asking Me by his own remembrance of Me, I will give him better than what I give to those who ask.' I called on Allah (SWT) once and He answered me. I forgot the need because of the fact that when He answers a supplication, His bestowal is far greater and more sublime than what the bondsman desires from Him, even if it be the Garden and its eternal blessings. This is understood only by lovers who act, Gnostics, the elite and the select of Allah (SWT).

SECTION 17

Fasting

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'Fasting is a protection from the calamities of this world, and a veil from punishment of the next.' When you fast, intend thereby to restrain your self from fleshly appetites and to cut off those worldly desires arising from the ideas of Satan and his kind. Put yourself in the

position of a sick person who desires neither food nor drink; expect recovery at any moment from the sickness of wrong actions. Purify your inner being of every lie, turbidity, heedlessness and darkness, which might cut you off from the meaning of being sincere for the sake of Allah (SWT). Somebody said to one of the Companions, 'You are already weak; fasting will weaken you further.' 'I am preparing that fast for the evil of a long day,' he said. 'Patience in obeying Allah (SWT) is easier than patience in His punishment.' And the Messenger of Allah once quoted Allah (SWT)'s words, 'Fasting is done for Me, and I am its reward.' Fasting kills the desire of the self and the appetite of greed, and from it comes purity of the heart, purification of the limbs, cultivation of the inner and the outer being, thankfulness for blessings, charity to the poor, increase of humble supplication, humility, weeping and most of the ways of seeking refuge in Allah (SWT); and it is the reason for the breaking of aspiration, the lightening of evil things, and the redoubling of good deeds. It contains benefits which cannot be counted. It is enough that we mention some of them to the person who understands and is given success in making use of fasting, if Allah (SWT) wills.

Abstinence

Abstinence is the key to the door of the next world and freedom from the Fire. It consists of leaving everything which could distract you from Allah (SWT) without regret, nor feeling proud about leaving it, nor waiting for relief from your renunciation, nor seeking any praise for it. Indeed abstinence means a person considering such things to be of no avail to him: he deems their passing him by as a relief and comfort for him, and their presence as a misfortune for him; thus he always flees from misfortune and clings to what brings him ease and relief. The man of abstinence is the one who chooses the next world. He chooses abasement over might and this world, striving over rest, hunger over being full, the well-being of what is to come later over immediate trials, and remembrance over heedlessness. His self is in this world and his heart is in the next world. The Messenger of Allah said, 'Love of this world is the fount of every error;' and elsewhere, 'This world is a corpse; whoever seeks it is like a dog.' Do you not see how it loves what Allah (SWT) hates? What error is a greater crime than this? One of the

Holy Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) family said, 'If all of this world were a morsel in a child's mouth, we would have mercy on him. What then is the state of someone who throws the limits set by Allah (SWT) behind his back, seeking and desiring this world? If the dwelling place of this world had been any good, it would not have shown you mercy, nor answered you, and would have bidden you farewell in departure.' The Messenger of Allah said, 'When Almighty Allah (SWT) created this world, He commanded it to obey Him and it obeyed its Lord. He told it, "Oppose the one who seeks you and give success to the one who opposes you." It acts according to what Allah (SWT) charged it to do, and what He impressed upon its nature.

A Description of this World

This world is like a body whose head is pride, whose eyes are avarice, whose ears are greed, whose tongue is dissimulation, whose hand is desire, whose legs are vanity, whose heart is heedlessness, whose being is annihilation, and whose product is extinction. It brings pride to whoever loves it, avarice to whoever prefers it, greed to whoever seeks it, and cloaks with hypocrisy whoever praises it. It gives vanity power over whoever desires it; it leads to heedlessness in the person who relies on it. It seduces whoever admires its goods, but those goods do not last for him. It returns the person who gathers it and is miserly with it to its own abode, which is the Fire.

SECTION 18

Reluctance to Act

A person who feels reluctant to act falls short of what is correct, even if he does right; while a person who acts voluntarily is correct, even if he errs. The reluctant one obtains only contempt in the end, and weariness, toil and misery while he is carrying out the action. The outer being of a reluctant person is showing off, and his inner being is hypocrisy: they are the wings with which he flies. The reluctant person never has any of the qualities of the righteous nor any of the marks of the believers, wherever he is. As Allah (SWT) said to His Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family),

قُلْ مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِينَ

Say, I do not ask you for any reward for it; nor am I of those who affect [i.e. act with reluctance]. (Q. 38:86)

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'We, the company of Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), the fearfully aware, the trusty, we disavow the reluctant.' So, fear Allah (SWT) and do away with reluctance, and it will mark you with the sign of belief. Do not be occupied with something whose garment is affliction, with food which in the end is emptiness, with an abode whose end is ruin, with wealth whose end is to be inherited by others, with comrades whom in the end one must take leave of, with glory which in the end is abasement, with loyalty which in the end is abandonment, or with a life whose end is grief.

Delusion

A person who is deluded is wretched in this world, and is duped in the next world because he has sold what is better for what is baser. Do not admire yourself. Sometimes you may be deceived by your property and your bodily health into supposing that you will last forever. Sometimes you are deceived by your long life, your children and your friends into thinking that you will be saved by the.

Sometimes you are deceived by your beauty and the circumstances of your birth, which bring you your hopes and desires so easily that you think that you are truthful and successful in achieving your goal. Sometimes you are deceived by the regret you show people for your shortcoming in worship, but Allah (SWT) knows the opposite of that is in your heart. Sometimes you make yourself worship in a spirit of reluctance; but Allah (SWT) desires sincerity. Sometimes you imagine that you are calling on Allah (SWT) when you are calling on another. Sometimes you imagine that you are giving good counsel to people, while your real desire is that they bow to you. Sometimes you blame yourself when you are really praising yourself.

Know that you will only emerge from the darkness of delusion and desire by sincerely turning in repentance to Almighty Allah (SWT), and to whatever you know about Him, and to recognize the faults

in yourself which are not consistent with your intellect and knowledge, and which the faith, the law and the customary practices of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and the Imams (peace be upon him) of guidance do not tolerate. If you are content with your present condition, there is no one more wretched than you in knowledge and action, nor anyone with a more wasted life. You will inherit grief on the Day of Resurrection.

A Description of the Hypocrite

The hypocrite is content to be far from the mercy of Allah (SWT), because his outward actions appear to be in line with Islamic laws; and yet he is heedless and ineffective, mocking and transgressing its truthfulness in his heart. The mark of hypocrisy is disregard for lies, treachery, insolence, false claims, insincerity, foolishness, error and lack of modesty, making little of acts of disobedience, desiring believers to lose faith, and making light of misfortunes in the faith; pride, praise, praise of love, love of praise, envy, preferring this world to the next and evil to good, inciting slander, love of amusement, dealing with prevaricators, helping aggressive people avoiding good deeds, disparaging those who do good, considering good the evil done by the hypocrite and recognizing as odious whatever good another person does; and many other things like that.

Allah (SWT) has described the hypocrites in more than one place. He said,

﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَى حَرْفٍ فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرٌ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ انقَلَبَ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ﴾

And among men is he who serves Allah [standing] on the verge. So that if good befalls him he is satisfied therewith, but if a trial afflicts him he turns back headlong; he loses this world as well as the next; that is a manifest loss. (Q. 22:11)

In describing them, Allah (SWT) said,

﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللّهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَمَا هُم بِمُؤْمِنِينَ. يُخَادِعُونَ اللّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلاَّ أَنفُسَهُم وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ. فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللّهُ مَرَضاً وَلَهُم عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ﴾

There are some people who say, "We believe in Allah and the Last Day", but they are not at all believers. They desire to deceive Allah and those who believe, but they deceive only themselves while they do not perceive. There is a disease in their hearts, so Allah added to their disease. (Q. 2:8-10) The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'The hypocrite is he who, having made a promise, breaks it; when he acts, he does evil; when he speaks, he lies; when he is trusted, he betrays; when he is given provision, he is reckless; when it is withheld, he makes much of his life.' He also said, 'A person whose innermost being contradicts his public face is a hypocrite whoever he is, wherever he is, in whatever time he lives, and whatever rank he has.'

Proper Social Transaction

Behaving correctly with Almighty Allah (SWT)'s creation without disobedience to Him comes from Allah (SWT)'s increased favor to His bondsmen. Whoever is humble to Allah (SWT) in his heart behaves well openly. Keep company with people for the sake of Allah (SWT), not for your portion of something which belongs to this world or to seek position or for showing off or to increase your own reputation. Do not cross the limits of the Law for the sake of eminence and fame: they will not profit you at all, and you will miss the next world without gaining any benefit.

Taking and Giving

A person who prefers taking to giving is deluded, because in his heedlessness he thinks that what is now is better than what is to come. It behaves the believer, when he takes something, that he should take it rightfully. If he gives, it should be for a right purpose, in a right way, and from his rightful possessions. How many a taker gives up his faith, but he is not aware of that! How many a giver brings down on himself the wrath of Allah (SWT)! The matter is not just a question of taking and giving, however; rather he is saved who fears Allah (SWT) when taking and giving, and who holds tight to the rope of righteousness.

In this regard people are of two types: the elite and the common. The elite considers with painstaking caution and does not take until he is certain that it is permissible. If it is unclear to him, he will

only take when it is absolutely necessary. The common man considers only the outward form: he takes whatever he does not find to be stolen or extorted, and says, 'There is no harm in this: it is permissible for me.' Here the matter is clear, and he takes it by the judgment of Almighty Allah (SWT) and spends it in His pleasure.

SECTION 19

Brotherhood

Three things are rare in every age: brotherhood in Allah (SWT); a devout, affectionate wife who helps you in Allah (SWT)'s faith; and a rightly guided son. Whoever finds these three things has obtained the good of both abodes and the fullest portion of this world and the next. Beware of taking someone as a brother when you are moved by greed, fear, inclination, money, food or drink. Seek the fraternity of the Allah (SWT) fearing, even to the ends of the earth, and even if you spend your entire life seeking them. Allah (SWT) has not left anyone better than them after the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family)s on the face of the earth, nor has He given a bondsman any blessing like that of success in finding their company. Allah (SWT) has said,

الْأَخِلَّاء يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ

The friends shall on that day be enemies to one another except those who guard [against evil]. (Q. 43:67)

I believe that anyone who looks for a friend without fault in these times will remain without a friend. Do you not see that the first mark of honor which Allah (SWT) bestowed on His Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) when their call to faith became known was a trusty friend or helper. Similarly, the most sublime gift which Allah (SWT) bestowed on His friends, supporters (awliya'), pure friends and trustees was the company of His Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family)s. This is proof that, after knowledge of Allah (SWT), there is no blessing in either abode which is more sublime, more excellent or more pure than company in Allah (SWT) and brotherhood for His sake.

Consultation

Take counsel in the matters faith demands of you with one who has the following five qualities: intellect, knowledge, experience, good counsel, and precaution. If you find these five things in a person, then make use of them, be resolute and rely on Allah (SWT). This will lead you to what is correct. As for matters of this world which do not pertain to faith, make decisions about them and then do not think about them further. If you do this, you will obtain the blessings of livelihood and the sweetness of obedience. Knowledge is obtained through consultation.

The man of intellect is he who derives new knowledge from consultation, and that guides him to obtain his goal. Consulting a proper counselor is like reflecting upon the creation of the heavens and the earth and the destruction of both, since the more intense a person's reflection upon these two things, the deeper he penetrates into the seas of the light of gnosis and the more he increases his understanding and certainty. Do not take counsel from someone when your intellect does not give him any credence, even if he is famous for his discernment and scrupulousness. When you take counsel from someone your heart trusts, do not disagree with what he advises even if it is contrary to what you want. Surely the self combines both acceptance of the truth with what is opposed to it? That is, on receiving other truths which are clearer to him. Allah (SWT) has said,

﴿وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الأَمْرِ﴾

Take counsel with them in the affair. (Q. 3:159) and again,

﴿...وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ...﴾

Their rule is to take counsel among themselves. (Q. 42:38) that is, they consult each other about it.

Forbearance

Forbearance is a lamp of Allah (SWT) which leads the holder to His excellence; a person cannot be forbearing unless he is aided by the lights of gnosis and tawhid. Forbearance has five facets: when a man is exalted, but is then humbled; when he is truthful, he is

accused of being a liar; when he calls people to the truth, he is scorned; when he is injured without having done any crime; and when he demands his rights and they oppose him. When you have given each of these its due, you have achieved the goal. When you have countered the half-wit by turning away from him and not answering him, people will come to your aid, for he who wages war with a fool is like a man who puts wood on the fire.

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'The believer is like the earth: people obtain benefits from it while they are on it.' Whoever cannot endure people's harsh rudeness will not reach Allah (SWT)'s good pleasure, because His pleasure is closely linked with people's antipathy. It is related that a man said to Ahnaf ibn Qays, 'You are causing me to worry.' 'I will forbear with you,' he replied. The Messenger of Allah said, 'I was sent as a centre of forbearance, a mine of knowledge, and a home for patience.' He spoke the truth when he said, 'True forbearance is when you pardon a person who acts badly with you and opposes you, while you have the power to take revenge on him.' It is as the supplication says: 'My Allah (SWT), You are too vast in favor and forbearance to punish me for my action and abase me for my mistake.'

Following Another's Example

Following the example of another is nothing more than what has been bestowed upon the spirit at its origin, when the light of time was mixed with that of eternity. Following a model, however, does not consist of adopting the marks of outward actions and claiming descent from the awliya' of the faith from among the wise and the Imams (peace be upon him). As Allah (SWT) said,

﴿يَوْمَ نَدْعُو كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ﴾

The day when We will call every people by their Imam. (Q. 17:71) that is, whoever follows someone with effacement is pure.

And elsewhere,

﴿فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَا أَنسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا يَتَسَاءَلُونَ﴾

So when the trumpet is blown, there will be no ties of relationship between them on that day, nor shall they ask of each other. (Q. 23:101)

The Commander of the Faithful said, 'Souls are a drafted army. Those who know each other are intimate, and those who do not know each other differ from each other.' Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyah was asked who had taught him good manners, and he replied, 'My Lord taught me manners in myself. Whatever I find to be good in people of intelligence and insight I follow and use; whatever I find ugly in the ignorant I avoid and forsake forever. That has brought me to the path of knowledge. There is no sounder way for the astute believer than to follow the example of others, because it is the clearest path and soundest goal.' And Allah (SWT) said to Muhammad, the greatest of His creation, These are they whom Allah guided, therefore follow their guidance. (6:91) Elsewhere He said,

﴿ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ أَنِ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ﴾

Then We revealed to you: Follow the faith of Abraham, the upright one. (Q. 16:123)

If the faith of Allah (SWT) had had a path straighter than following a model, He would have recommended it to His Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and His supporters. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'There is a light in the heart which is illuminated only by following the truth and intending towards the right path. It is a part of the light of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) which has been entrusted in the hearts of the believers.'

SECTION 20

Pardon

Pardoning someone when you have the power to punish is one of the customary practices of the messengers and the secrets of the Allah (SWT) fearing. Pardon is when you do not charge your companion for what he has done wrong outwardly, when you forget the cause by which there was inward affliction, and when you

extend great charity in your choice despite having power over him. No one could find a way to that pardon except by the one whom Allah (SWT) has pardoned and forgiven for the sins which he has committed and the deeds he has put off, and who has been adorned with His mark of honor and clothed in the light of His radiance. This is because pardon and forgiveness are two of the attributes of Almighty Allah (SWT) which He entrusted in the secrets of His pure friends, so that they adopt the manners of their Creator and Maker with creation. This is why He said,

﴿وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَن يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾

They should pardon and turn away. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is forgiving, merciful. (Q. 24:22)

If you do not pardon another mortal like yourself, how can you hope for the pardon of the Compelling King? The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said that his Lord commanded him to have these qualities, saying, 'Unite with whoever breaks with you, and pardon whoever wrongs you; give to whoever deprives you, and be good to whoever is bad to you.' He commanded us to follow him when Allah (SWT) said,

﴿وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانتَهُوا﴾

Whatever the Messenger (peace be upon him and his family)gives you, accept it, and from whatever he forbids you, keep back. (Q. 59:7)

Pardon is a secret of Allah (SWT) in the heart of His select. Whoever is gladdened by it has made Him happy. The Messenger of Allah said, 'Is any of you capable of being like Abu Damdam?' 'O Messenger of Allah,' they said, 'Who is Abu Damdam?' The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) replied, 'One of your ancestors who, when he woke up in the morning would say, "O Allah (SWT), I have forgiven the shattering of my honor by the common people." '

Exhortation

The best form of exhortation is when the words used do not go beyond the limits of truth, and the actions performed do not go

beyond the limits of sincerity. The Warner and the warned are like someone awake and someone asleep: whoever awakes from the slumber of his heedlessness, opposition and rebellion does good to awaken others from that sleep. Anyone who travels in the deserts of transgression and engrosses himself in the wilds of misguidance, abandons his modesty because of his love for reputation, showing off and fame, wasting his time with those who wear the garments of the righteous, his outward appearance divulging the substance, of what is inside of him. In reality he is devoid of any substance and his inner destitution is flooded with love of praise and enveloped in the darkness of greed. How seduced he is by his passion! How he leads people astray with his words! As Allah (SWT) has said,

﴿لَبِئْسَ الْمَوْلَى وَلَبِئْسَ الْعَشِيرُ﴾

Evil certainly is the guardian and evil certainly is the associate. (Q. 22:13)

But whoever Allah (SWT) has protected by the light of tawhid, support, and excellent success, his heart is cleansed of impurity. He does not separate himself from gnosis and precaution; he listens to the words of the misguided while he ignores the speaker himself, whoever he is. The wise have said, 'Take wisdom, even if it comes from the mouths of madmen.' In the words of 'Isa (peace be upon him), 'Sit with anyone who reminds you of Allah (SWT) when you see him and meet him, aside from when he talks. Do not sit with someone when your outer being accepts him but your inner being rejects him.' That is someone who lays claim to what he does not have; if you are sincere, then they will yield to you. When you find someone with these three qualities, then seize the opportunity to see him, meet with him, and sit with him, even if it is only for an hour: this will have an effect on your faith, your heart, and your worship, through his blessing. If someone's words do not go beyond his actions, whose actions do not go beyond his truthfulness, and whose truthfulness does not contend with his Lord, then sit with him with respect and wait for mercy and blessing. Beware of the proof against you, and make his time in your company pleasant, so that you do not reproach him and lose. Look at him with the eye of Allah (SWT)'s favor upon him, His selecting him and His honoring him.

Advice (wasiyah)

The best of advice and the most necessary is that you do not forget your Lord, and that you remember Him always, and do not rebel against Him, and that you should worship Him whether sitting or standing. Do not be dazzled by His blessings and always be grateful to Him. Do not go out from under the protective cover of His mercy, immensity and majesty, lest you go astray and fall into the field of destruction, even if affliction and adversity touch you and the fires of trials burn you. Know that the afflictions He sends are filled with the eternal marks of His honor, and that the trials He inflicts bring about His pleasure and nearness, even though it may be after some time. What blessings there are for the person who has knowledge, and who is granted success therein! It is related that when someone asked the Messenger of Allah for advice, he said, 'Never get angry, for anger contains opposition to your Lord. Beware of making excuses, for they contain hidden polytheism. Say your prayers like someone saying farewell, for it contains a link to Allah (SWT) and nearness to Him. Be modest before Allah (SWT) as you are modest before the righteous among your neighbors, for this contains increased certainty.' Allah (SWT) has gathered up the advice of all our ancestors, both distant and near, into one single characteristic?

Precaution (taqwa).

In the words of Almighty Allah (SWT),

﴿وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنِ اتَّقُواْ اللّهَ﴾

Certainly We enjoined those who were given the Book before you, and [We enjoin] you too that you should be careful of [your duty]. (Q. 4:131)

This is the sum of every sound act of worship: it is by precaution that people reach the high degrees and highest ranks. It is by precaution that people lead a good life with constant companion ship.

﴿حِكْمَةٌ بَالِغَةٌ فَمَا تُغْنِ النُّذُرُ. فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ يَدْعُ الدَّاعِ إِلَى شَيْءٍ نُّكُرٍ﴾

Surely those who guard [against evil] shall be in gardens and rivers, in the seat of honor with a most powerful King. (Q. 54:54-5)

Trustful Reliance

Trust (tawakkul) is a cup sealed with Allah (SWT): none may drink from it or break the seal save the trustful. It is as Allah (SWT) said,

﴿وَعَلَى اللّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ﴾

On Allah should the trustful rely, (Q. 14:12) and,

﴿وَعَلَى اللّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُواْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ﴾

On Allah should you rely if you are believers. (Q. 5:23)

Allah (SWT) made trust the key of belief, and belief the lock of trust. The reality of trust is preferring others to oneself; the root of preferring others is to advance the other person's claim. He who trusts continues to affirm one of two preferences in his trust. If he prefers what is caused (i.e. phenomenal being), he is veiled by it. If he prefers the Causer of the cause of trust (i.e. the Creator, glory be to Him and may He be exalted) he remains with Him. If you want to be a man of trust and not a man of causes, then say the tatbir over your ruh five times, and bid farewell to all your hopes as death bids farewell to life. The lowest level of trust is nothing more than placing your highest aspiration before your own advancement; moreover, you should neither seek for your own portion nor look for what you lack, for either of those things would break the bond of your belief while you are unaware.

If you are truly determined to live by one of the marks of the trusting one, and by His trust with respect to one of these two preferences, then cling to this story for support. It is related that one of the men of trust came to one of the Imams (peace be upon him) and said to him, 'Show me compassion by answering a question about trust.' The Imam knew the man to be of excellent trust and rare scrupulousness, and he saw his sincerity in what he was asking before the man actually put the question. 'Stay where you are and wait with me for awhile,' he told him. While he was formulating his answer a poor man passed by. The Imam put his hand into his pocket and, taking something out, gave it to the poor

man. Then he turned to the man who had asked the question and said, 'Come and ask about what you have seen.' 'O Imam,' the man said, 'I know that you could have given me the answer to my question before making me wait. Why then did you delay?' And the Imam replied, 'Belief means reflecting on the meaning before I speak. For how could I be negligent of my innermost being when my Lord perceives it? How could I discuss the science of trust while there is a coin in my pocket? It is not permitted for me to discuss that until after I had given it to him, so understand!' The questioner sighed deeply and swore that he would not seek shelter in a house nor rely on another mortal as long as he lived.

SECTION 21

Respect for One's Brothers

The reason why brothers in the faith shake hands is Allah (SWT)'s love for them. The Messenger of Allah said, 'Whenever brethren shake hands in Allah (SWT), their wrong actions are dispersed so that they become as they were on the day their mothers bore them.' No two brothers' love and respect for each other increases without there being increase for each of them also.

It is obligatory for the one having most knowledge of Allah (SWT)'s faith among the two to stimulate his friend to perform the obligatory functions which Allah (SWT) has made necessary, and to guide him in going straight, in contentment and moderation, to give him the good news of Allah (SWT)'s mercy and to make him fear His punishment. The other brother must seek the blessing of his guidance and hold to what he calls him to, adhere to his admonition, and be guided by him, all the while seeking protection in Allah (SWT) and seeking His help and success. 'Isa (peace be upon him) was once asked, 'How are you this morning?' To which he replied, 'I do not possess the benefit which I hope for, nor can I repel what I am on my guard against, while I am commanded to obey and forbidden to rebel. I do not think that any pauper is poorer than I am.' And when Uways al-Qarani was asked the same question, he said, 'How is a man in the morning when he does not know if he will be alive in the evening, and in the evening he does not know if he will be alive in the morning?' Abu Dharr said, 'In the

morning I thank my Lord and I thank myself.' The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'Whoever wakes up in the morning aspiring for something other than Allah (SWT) has become among the losers and transgressors.'

Striving and Discipline

Bliss belongs to the bondsman who strives for Allah (SWT) against his own nature and passions: he who then defeats his passion wins Allah (SWT)'s pleasure, and the one whose intellect leaves behind the self which commands evil through his striving jihad, submission and humility in the service of Allah (SWT) has won a great victory. There is no veil between the bondsman and Allah (SWT) which is darker or more desolate than that of self and passion; there is no better weapon to fight and destroy them than total need of Allah (SWT), glory be to Him, fear, hunger, thirst in the day and wakefulness at night. When a person possessing these traits dies, he dies a martyr. If he lives according to the straight path, his end will take him to the greatest pleasure of Allah (SWT).

Allah (SWT) said,

﴿وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾

And [as for] those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them in our ways, and Allah is most surely with the doers of good. (Q. 29:69)

When you see someone striving harder than you, upbraid yourself, and reproach yourself in order to encourage yourself to do more. Put a halter of command and rein of prohibition on the self, and carry on as if you were a trainer who does not let his mount take a step unless it is completely correct. The Messenger of Allah used to pray until his feet were swollen. He would say, 'How can I not be a thankful slave?' The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) wanted to make his community consider this so that they would not neglect striving, toil, and discipline in any state. If you were to experience the sweetness of worshipping Allah (SWT), to see its blessing and be illuminated by its light, you would not be patient without it for a single hour, even if you were to be cut to

pieces. No one turns away from it without being denied such benefits of protection and success from Allah (SWT) as were attained by his forefathers. Rabi' ibn Khuthaym was asked why he did not sleep at night. 'Because I fear to spend the night in sleep,' he replied.

Contemplation of Death

Contemplating death kills desire, cuts off the roots of heedlessness and strengthens the heart with Allah (SWT)'s promise of life hereafter. It refines nature, breaks the signs of passion, extinguishes the fire of greed and renders this world vile; this is the meaning of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family)'s words said: 'To reflect for an hour is better than a year of worship.' That hour of reflecting is the moment when you unite the ropes binding you to this world and fasten them to the next. The descent of mercy from Heaven never ceases when death is remembered in this way. If a person does not reflect on death, and on his own lack of any means to escape it, on his great incapacity, on the length of time he will spend in the grave and his bewilderment at the Resurrection, there is no good in him.

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'Remember the destroyer of pleasures.' When asked what that was, he replied, 'Death. Whenever one of Allah (SWT)'s servants remembers this when he is wealthy, this world is constricted for him. Whenever he remembers it in hardship, it is expanded for him.' Death is the first station of the next world and the last station of this world. Blessed is he who shows himself generous and benefits at the beginning, and blessed is he who has done his best at the end. Death is the closest thing to accompany the son of Adam, although he deems it to be the furthest away. How much man inflicts on himself. What weaker creature is there? In death lies the rescue of the sincere and the destruction of the wrongdoers.

That is why some yearn for death yearn for it while others hate it. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'If a person meets Allah (SWT), Allah (SWT) loves to meet him; and if a person hates to meet Allah (SWT), the Allah (SWT) hates to meet him.'

Good Opinion

The root of good opinion is a man's belief and the soundness of his heart; the sign of good opinion is that whenever he looks, he sees with the eye of purity and virtue wherever he goes, and modesty, trustworthiness, protection and truthfulness are cast into his heart. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'Have a good opinion of your brothers: through that you will gain purity of heart and firmness of nature.' And Ubayy ibn Ka'b said, 'When you see a quality which you disapprove of in one of your brothers, then give it seventy interpretations and see if your heart can be at peace with one of them. If it is not, then blame yourself if you cannot excuse him.

If you yourself have a quality which will easily make for seventy interpretations, then you should disapprove of yourself more than you do of him.' As Allah (SWT) revealed to David, 'Remind My slaves of My blessings and My favors. They have only seen exquisite goodness from Me so they should only expect that what remains will be like what they have already had from Me.' Good opinion invites good worship. A person who is deluded continues to remain in rebellion even while he hopes for forgiveness. The best opinion in Allah (SWT)'s creation is reserved for those who obey Him, hope for His reward and fear His punishment.

The Messenger of Allah said, relating from his Lord, 'I am with My slave's good opinion of Me, O Muhammad.' Whoever fails to live up to the reality of the gifts which come from his opinion of his Lord has intensified the proof against himself, and is among those who are deceived by the shackles of his passion.

SECTION 22

Entrusting Oneself to Allah (SWT)

He one who entrusts his affair to Allah (SWT) is in eternal rest and constant carefree ease of life; he is above caring about anything except Allah (SWT), as the Commander of the Faithful said, I was content with what Allah (SWT) allotted me, and I entrusted my affair to my Creator. As Allah (SWT) was good in what has passed,

so He will be good in what remains. As Allah (SWT) said, in the words of a believer among the people of Pharaoh;

وَأُفَوِّضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ. فَوَقَاهُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِ مَا مَكَرُوا وَحَاقَ بِآلِ فِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ

I entrust my affair to Allah, surely Allah sees the servants. So Allah protected him from the evil consequences of what they planned and the most evil punishment overtook Pharaoh's people. (Q. 40:44-5)

The Arabic word for entrustment (tafwid) consists of five letters, each letter having an injunction. He who heeds their commands brings the ta'ofhis abandoning (tark) plans in this world; the ja' of the annihilation (fana') of every aspiration other than Allah (SWT); the waw of fulfilling (wafa') the contract and confirming the promise; the despairing (ya's) of yourself, and certainty (yaqin) in your Lord; and the dad of a conscience (damir) which is purely for Allah (SWT), and of the need (darurah) for Him. He who entrusts everything to Allah (SWT) wakes up in the morning free of all evils, and at night sleeps protected in his faith.

Certainty

Certainty will take the bondsman to every sublime state and every wondrous station; thus did the Messenger of Allah make known the immensity of certainty when he mentioned that 'Isa (peace be upon him) walked on water. He said, 'If he had had more certainty, he could have walked on air.' By this he indicated that in spite of the majesty of the place which the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family)s have with Allah (SWT), they also have different ranks according to their certainty. Certainty is ever-increasing, and remains so throughout eternity. Believers also vary in the strength and weakness of their certainty. A person whose certainty is strong may be recognized by the fact that he finds himself stripped of all ability and power other than what Allah (SWT) has given him, and by his keeping to Allah (SWT)'s command and worship both outwardly and inwardly. He considers the states of having and not having, increase and decrease, praise and blame, might and abasement, all to be the same because he considers them all on an equal level. However, a person who weakens his certainty attaches

himself to external matters, and allows his self free rein therein. He follows the customs and sayings of people without substantiating them, and strives in the affairs of this world, accumulating its wealth and holding on to it, acknowledging and affirming it with his tongue. There is no withholder or giver except Allah (SWT), and the slave can only obtain what he is provided with and allotted. Effort will not increase provision, but he disavows that by his action and his heart. In Allah (SWT)'s words,

﴿يَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِهِم مَّا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُونَ﴾

They say with their mouths what is not in their hearts; and Allah best knows what they conceal. (Q. 3:167)

Allah (SWT) was compassionate to His bondsmen when He gave them permission to earn money however they might as long as they do not exceed the limits of Allah (SWT) or abandon their obligations to Him and the behavior of His Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) in any of their actions, or abandon the spirit of trust or become caught in the field of greed. But when they forget this, attaching themselves to the opposite of what has been delineated for them, they are counted among the destroyed, who at the end have nothing but false claims. Not everyone who earns is necessarily trustful: from his earnings he brings for himself only what is forbidden or doubtful. He may be recognized by the effect his gains have upon him, by his insatiable hunger, and how he spends for this world without let. He who is given permission to earn is one whose self gains while his heart trusts in Allah (SWT). If he has a lot of money, he is like a trustee who knows that having property and not having it is the same thing. If he withholds it, he withholds for Allah (SWT); and if he spends it, he does so in the way Allah (SWT) has commanded. Both are for Allah (SWT).

Fear and Hope

Fear is the custodian of the heart, and hope is the intercessor of the self; whoever knows Allah (SWT) fears Him and sets his hopes in Him. They are the wings of belief with which the true servant flies to Allah (SWT)'s pleasure. They are the eyes of his intellect, with which he sees Allah (SWT)'s promise and threat; fear contemplates the justice of Allah (SWT) through careful awareness

of that threat. Hope calls for Allah (SWT)'s overflowing favor and gives life to the heart, while fear kills the self. The Messenger of Allah said, 'The believer has two kinds of fear: fear of what has passed and fear of what is to come.' In the death of the self lies the life of the heart, which leads to firmness in practice. Whoever worships Allah (SWT) with a balance of fear and hope will not be misguided, and will obtain what he hopes for. How can a slave be anything other than fearful when he does not know at what action his record will be closed, while he has to his credit no deed capable of helping him, no power to do anything, nor any place to fly to? How can he fail to hope when he knows that despite his incapacity he is drowned in the seas of Allah (SWT)'s blessings and favors, which cannot be counted or numbered. The lover worships his Lord with hope by contemplating his own state with the eye of wakefulness; and the abstinent worships with fear. Uways al-Qarani said to Haram ibn Hayyan, 'People act in hope.' 'But you act in fear,' Haram replied. There are two types of fear: permanent and changing. Permanent fear brings about hope, while changing fear brings about permanent fear. Similarly, there are two types of hopes: concealed and open.

Concealed hope brings about permanent fear, which strengthens the connection of love; while open hope fulfils a man's expectations regarding his incapacity and shortcomings in the things he has done during his life.

Contentment

Contentment is when a person is content with what he loves and what he hates; it is a ray of the light of gnosis. He who is content is annihilated to all his choices; he is really the one with whom Allah (SWT) is content. Contentment is a name which contains the meanings of servitude, and maybe described as the joy of the heart.

I heard my father, Muhammad al-Baqir, say, 'To attach the heart to what is present is association (shirk), and to what is not there is disbelief (kufr): these are the wings of heedlessness.' I am amazed at anyone who claims to be a slave to Allah (SWT) and then contends with Him over His decrees. Content Gnostics ('arifin) are far from being like that.'

SECTION 23

Affliction

Affliction is an adornment for the believer and a mark of honor for the man of intellect, because facing it directly needs steadfastness and firm footedness, both of which confirm belief. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'We, the company of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family)s, are the people who have the hardest trials, then after us come the believers, then the others like them.' Whoever tastes the food of affliction while under Allah (SWT)'s protection enjoys it more than he enjoys Allah (SWT)'s blessing. He yearns for it when it is not there, because the lights of blessing lie under the balance of affliction and trial, and the balance of affliction and trial lies under the lights of blessing. Many are delivered from affliction and then destroyed in blessing. Allah (SWT) praised none of His bondsmen, from Adam up to Muhammad, until He had tested him and seen how he fulfilled the duty of worship while in affliction.

Allah (SWT)'s marks of honor come, in fact, at the last stage, but the afflictions themselves come in the beginning. Whoever leaves the path of affliction is ignoring the lamp of the believers, the beacon of those near to Allah (SWT), and the guide for those on the right path. There is no good in a slave who complains of a single trial preceded by thousands of blessings and followed by thousands of comforts. Whoever does not show the patience required in affliction is deprived of thankfulness in the blessings he receives. Similarly, whoever does not give the thankfulness owed for blessings is denied the patience owed in affliction. Whoever is denied both of them is an outcast.

Ayyub said in his supplication, 'O Allah (SWT), verily seventy comforts and ease did not come to me until You sent me seventy afflictions.' And Wahb ibn Munabbih said, 'Affliction to a believer is like a bit to a horse and a halter to a camel.' 'Ali (peace be upon him) said, 'Steadfastness in relation to belief is like the head to the body. The head of steadfastness is afflictions but only those who act righteously understand that.'

Patience

Patience reveals whatever light and purity there is in the innermost being of Allah (SWT)'s servants, while anxiety shows up the darkness and bereftness inside them. Everyone claims to be patient, but only the humble are firm in it. Everyone denies his anxiety, although it is quite obvious in a hypocrite because the onset of trials and afflictions tells you who is truthful and who is a liar. Patience is a sensation that continuously prevails in one's consciousness, but what occurs upon a sudden upset cannot be called patience.

Anxiety is what disturbs the heart and brings the person sorrow, changing his complexion and his state. Every event whose beginnings are without humility, repentance, and humble supplication to Allah (SWT) comes from someone who is anxious, not someone who is patient. The beginning of patience is bitter, but its end is sweet for some people; but for others both its beginning and end are bitter. Whoever enters it at its end has entered it. Whoever enters it from its beginning has left it. A person who knows the value of patience cannot bear to be without it. In the story of Moses (peace be upon him) and Khidr Allah (SWT) said,

﴿وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَى مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا﴾

How can you have patience in that of which you have no comprehensive knowledge? (Q. 18:69)

Whoever is unwillingly patient, who does not complain to people and does not become anxious when his veil is rent, is counted among the common people. His share is as Allah (SWT) said,

﴿...وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ...﴾

Give good news to the patient, (Q. 2:155) that is, good news of the Garden and forgiveness. Whoever meets affliction with an open heart, showing patience with tranquillity and dignity, is counted among the elite and his portion is as Allah (SWT) said,

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾

Surely Allah is with the patient. (Q. 8:46)

Sorrow

Sorrow is one of the marks of the Gnostics, through the magnitude of what comes to them of the Unseen when they are in seclusion, and the intensity of their glorification of Allah (SWT). The outer being of the sorrowful is contraction and his inner being is expansion. He lives with men contentedly, in a life of nearness to Allah (SWT). The sorrowful person is not a man of reflection, because he who reflects is forced to do so, while a sorrowful person is so by nature. Sorrow comes from within, and reflection begins by seeing phenomena? There is a difference between them. Allah (SWT) said in the story of Jacob,

إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللّهِ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

I only complain of my grief and sorrow to Allah, and I know [from Allah] what you do not know. (Q. 12:86)

This is because the knowledge gained in the state of sorrow is particular to him, and Allah (SWT) has singled him out for it and left the rest of the world deprived. When Rabi' ibn Khuthaym was asked why he was sorrowful, he replied, 'Because I have demands made on me. At the right of sorrow stands contrition, and at the left of it stands silence. Sorrow is a mark of the Gnostics of Allah (SWT). Reflection is shared by both the elite and the common folk. If sorrow were to be veiled from the hearts of the Gnostics for an hour, they would have to seek for help; but if it were to be placed in the hearts of others, they would dislike it. Sorrow is first, while second come security and good news. Reflection comes second, following the establishment of one's belief in and utter need of Allah (SWT) by one's seeking rescue with Him. The sorrowful person reflects, and he who reflects takes note. Each of them has a state, a science, a path, forbearance and honor.

Modesty

Modesty is a light whose essence is the heart of belief, meaning careful consideration in everything which is denounced by taw¦¢d and gnosis. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'Modesty is part of belief.' That is to say, modesty is accepted

through belief, and beliefs accepted through modesty. The modest person is all good. Whoever is denied modesty is all evil, even if he worships and is scrupulous. One step taken with modesty in the courtyards of Allah (SWT)'s awe is better than seventy years of worship. Insolence, however, is the beginning of hypocrisy, schism and disbelief. The Messenger of Allah said, 'If you have no shame, then do as you like.' This means that when modesty leaves you, then you are punished for all the good or evil that you do. The strength of modesty comes from sorrow and fear, and modesty is the home of fear. The beginning of modesty is awe, and its end is clear vision.

A modest person is occupied with his own affairs, withdrawn from people, and distant from what they are doing, even if they all forsake completely person with modesty. The Messenger of Allah said, 'When Allah (SWT) desires good for a bondsman, he makes him forget his good qualities, putting his evil qualities before his eyes and making him dislike sitting with those who turn away from the remembrance of Allah (SWT).' Modesty is of five kinds: shame for a wrong action; shame for one's incapacity; modesty in the face of a noble equality; the modesty of love, and the modesty of awe. Each of these has its adherents, who are ranked according to these categories of modesty.

Gnosis (ma 'rifah)

The person of the Gnostic ('arif) is with the people, while his heart is with Allah (SWT). If his heart were to forget Allah (SWT) for the time it takes to blink an eye, he would die of yearning for Him. The Gnostic is the trustee over the happenings of Allah (SWT), the treasury of His secrets, the repository of his lights, the proof of His mercy to creation, the instrument of His sciences and the measure of His favor and justice. He needs neither people, nor a goal, or nor this world.

He has no intimate except Allah (SWT), nor any speech, gesture or breath except by Allah (SWT), with Allah (SWT), and from Allah (SWT), for he frequents the garden of His sanctity and is enriched by His subtlest favors to him. Gnosis is a root whose branch is belief.

Love of Allah (SWT)

When love of Allah (SWT) takes possession of the innermost being of Allah (SWT)'s bondsman, it empties him of every preoccupation except remembrance of Allah (SWT). The lover is the most inwardly sincere of all people for Allah (SWT). He is the most truthful in his words, the most faithful in his pledge, the most astute in his actions, the purest in remembrance, and the greatest in devoting his self in worship. The angels compete with each other to converse with him, and boast of having seen him. Through him Allah (SWT) makes His lands flourish, and by His regard, Allah (SWT) honors His slaves. Allah (SWT) gives to people when they ask Him by His right, and removes afflictions from them by His mercy. If people knew how they stand with Allah (SWT), they would not try to draw near to Allah (SWT) save by the dust of his feet.

The Commander of the Faithful said, 'Love of Allah (SWT) is a fire which does not pass by anything without burning it up; the light of Allah (SWT) does not come over something without illuminating it.

The skies of Allah (SWT) do not cause a cloud to appear without it covering whatever is beneath it; the wind of Allah (SWT) does not blow on something without it moving. Allah (SWT)'s water gives life to everything, and from Allah (SWT)'s earth everything grows. Whoever loves Allah (SWT) is given every possession and authority.' The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'When Allah (SWT) loves a slave in my community, He casts love of him into the hearts of His friends, the spirits of the angels and the keepers of His throne,' so that they love him. That lover truly has an abundance of bliss, and will be able to intercede with Allah (SWT) on the Day of Resurrection.'

Love for the sake of Allah (SWT)

He who loves for the sake of Allah (SWT) is beloved of Allah (SWT), and he who is loved for the sake of Allah (SWT) is also beloved of Allah (SWT), since each loves the other for the sake of Allah (SWT). The Messenger of Allah said, 'Man is with whom he loves. Whoever loves a bondsman in Allah (SWT), loves Allah (SWT). No one loves Allah (SWT) except he whom Allah (SWT) loves.' And again, 'The best of people after the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his

family)s in this world and the next are those who love each other for Allah (SWT).' Every love based on some cause other than Allah (SWT) brings about enmity except for these two, for they come from the same source. Theirs always increases and never decreases. As Allah (SWT) said, The friends shall on that day be enemies to one another except for those who guard against evil, (Q. 43:67) because the root of love is being free of everything except the Beloved. The Commander of the Faithful said, 'The best thing in the Garden and the sweetest is love of Allah (SWT), love in Allah (SWT), and praise for Allah (SWT).' And Allah (SWT) has said, The last of their supplication shall be:

﴿...الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

"Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds", (Q. 10:11) because when they see the blessings that exist in the Garden, love is aroused in their hearts and then they call out, 'Praise be to Allah (SWT), Lord of the worlds.'

Yearning

He who yearns neither desires food, nor finds pleasure in drink, nor is he quickly excitable, nor is he intimate even with his close friends, nor does he seek refuge in a house, nor does he dwell in a city, nor wear a garment nor take rest enough for his need. He worships Allah (SWT) night and day, hoping to reach the object of his yearning. He speaks to Him with the tongue of yearning, declaring what is in his innermost being. This is as Allah (SWT) said of Moses (peace be upon him)when he met his Lord:

﴿...عَجِلْتُ إِلَيْكَ رَبِّ لِتَرْضَى﴾

I hastened to thee, my Lord, that Thou mightest be pleased. (Q. 20:84)

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) explained his state as follows: 'He neither ate, drank, slept nor desired any of that in his coming or going for forty days, out of his yearning for his Lord.' When you enter the arena of yearning, then say takbir for yourself and your desires in this world. Bid farewell to all familiar things, and turn from all except the One you desire most. Say the word Labbayk ('At Your service') between your life and your death:

'At Your service, O Allah (SWT), at Your service!' Then Allah (SWT) will make your reward great.

A person who yearns is like a drowning man: he is only concerned with being saved, and forgets everything else.

SECTION 24

Wisdom

Wisdom is the light of gnosis, the measure of fearful awareness and the fruit of truthfulness. Allah (SWT) has not given any of his servants a greater, more favorable, generous, lofty or more splendid blessing than wisdom for the heart. In Allah (SWT)'s words, He grants wisdom to whom He pleases and who-ever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good and none but the men of understanding re-member. (2:269)

That is, only the one whom I have singled out for My sake and whom I have designated for it knows what wisdom I have reserved and prepared. Wisdom is rescue, steadiness at the beginning of the affair and a firm stance at the end. It makes Allah (SWT)'s creatures aspire to Him. And the Messenger of Allah said to 'Ali (peace be upon him), 'That Allah (SWT) should guide one of His slaves at your hands is better for you than everything the sun shines upon, from east to west.'

Making Claims

In reality the claim belongs to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family)s, the Imams (peace be upon him) and the truthful, and a man who makes a claim improperly is like the accursed Iblis. He lays claim to devoutness while in reality he contends with his Lord and opposes His command. Whoever makes such claims reveals his lie, and the liar is not trustworthy; whoever claims what is not lawful for him has the gates of affliction opened for him. Anyone who makes a claim will doubtless be asked for clear proof, upon which he is shown to be bankrupt and disgraced. The truthful person is not asked the reason for his actions; as 'Al¢ (peace be

upon him) said, 'No one sees a truthful person without being in awe of him.'

Taking Heed

The Messenger of Allah said, 'He who learns his lessons in this world lives in it like a man asleep: he sees it but does not touch it. Abhorrence is increased in his heart and in his self by the behavior of those who are deceived by this world, which can only bring the reckoning and punishment. He exchanges that world for what will bring him near to Allah (SWT)'s pleasure and pardon. He washes himself free of those things to which the world invites him, and of its worldly adornments, with the water of the world's extinction.

Taking heed brings three things to the person who does so: knowledge of what he does, acting by what he knows, and knowledge of what he does not know. The root of taking heed lies in one's fear of its outcome, when he sees that he has fully realized abstinence at the beginning. Taking heed is only successful for those who have purity and insight.

Allah (SWT) said,

﴿...فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ﴾

Take a lesson, O you who have eyes! (Q. 59:2) and again,

﴿فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِن تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ﴾

For surely it is not the eyes that are blind, but blind are the hearts which are in the breasts. (Q. 22:46)

When Allah (SWT) opens the eye of someone's heart and insight by means of consideration, then He has given him a high station and an immense fortune.

Contentedness

If a man of contentedness were to swear that he would eventually be in charge of his two abodes, Allah (SWT) would confirm him in that, realizing his hope through the immensity of his contentment.

How can Allah (SWT)'s servant not be content with what He has allotted him when He says, We distribute among them their livelihood between them in the life of this world. (43:32)

Whoever yields to Allah (SWT), and is not heedless in affirming Him in what He wishes and whenever He wishes, whoever has certainty of His lordship ascribes of necessity the allotment of each man's provision directly to Himself, and does not recognize the reality of causes. Whoever is content with what is allotted is relieved of care, grief and fatigue. Whenever he decreases in contentment, he increases in desire. Greed for this world is the root of every evil; the person who has it is not saved from the Fire unless he repents. That is why the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said, 'Contentment is a kingdom which does not vanish.' It is the ship of Allah (SWT)'s pleasure, bearing whoever is on board it to His House. Have excellent trust in what you have not been given, and pleasure in what you have been given. Be patient in what befalls you, for this indeed is one of the greatest tasks.

Slander

Slander is forbidden to all Muslims, and he who slanders has sinned in every instance. Slander is when you mention something about a person which is not a fault in Allah (SWT)'s eyes, or when you censure what the people of knowledge praise.

As for discussing someone who is not present with regard to something which Allah (SWT) censures, when that person is guilty of it, then this does not amount to slander, even if he dislikes it when he hears it; and you are free of any slight of that person. This is in order to make the truth clear from the false by the clarification of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger.

However, this has a precondition, in that the person who says it must seek only to clarify what is true and false, in the faith of Allah (SWT). If he means to deprecate the person of whom he talks without meaning to make things clear, then he is taken to task for his corrupt goal, even if he is correct in what he says.

If you really slander someone, then seek pardon from that person. If you do not go that far nor reach that point, then ask Allah (SWT)'s forgiveness for that. Slander eats up good deeds as fire

eats up wood. As Allah (SWT) revealed to Moses, 'The slanderer will be the last to enter the Garden, if he repents. If he does not repent, then he will be the first to enter the Fire.' As He said,

﴿أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ﴾

Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it. (Q. 49:12)

The various aspects of slander occur when you mention a fault in someone's character, intellect, action, behavior, belief, ignorance and so on.

The origin of slander may be one of ten types: venting one's anger, pleasing other people, suspicion, believing a report without investigating it, having a bad opinion, envy, mockery, astonishment at some action in another which one does not comprehend, dissatisfaction or impatience with others, and embellishment of oneself at the expense of others.

If you seek Islam, then remember the Creator and not the created; then the circumstances of slander will be a lesson for you, and a wrong action will be replaced by a reward.

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IMAM AL-SADEQ'S COMMANDMENTS

❖ **His Commandment to His Son al- Kazim (a.s.)**:

Some of al- Sadiq Shi'a (followers) came to him while he was giving commandments to his son Musa (a.s.). Some of them are:

"My son, accept my commandments and memorize my words, for if you memorize them, you will lead a happy (life) and die a praised (death). My son, indeed, whoever is content becomes rich, whoever looks at what in the hand of other than him dies poor, whoever is displeased with what Allah has predestined for him accuses Allah in His Decree, whoever regards his own slip as small regards the slip of others as big.

My son, whoever uncovers the veil of others, his defect is uncovered, whoever draws the sword of disobedience killed with it, whoever digs a well for his brother falls into it, whoever makes friends with the foolish is degraded, whoever makes friends with the knowledgeable is respected, and whoever enters the evil places is accused.

My son, say the truth for you or against you, beware of the slander, for it plants the enmity in the hearts of men. My son, when you seek generosity, seek it from its places (i.e. the noble men), for generosity has places, the places have origins, the origins have branches, the branches have fruit, no fruit is sought but with a branch, and no firm origin but in a good place. My son, when visit, visit the good, but do not visit the wicked, for they are like the solid rock whose water does not gush out, the tree whose leaves do not get green, and the land whose plants do not appear."

I (the author) say: Some of these words have been mentioned in Nahj al-Balagha. No wonder, for they (the Imams) took knowledge from each other. Perhaps, al- Sadiq, peace be on him, has mentioned these words as quotations.

❖ **His Commandments to His Companions:**

Fear Allah, and prevent your tongue (from saying anything) but from the good. Be careful not to sharpen your tongues with false witness, false accusation, iniquity, and aggression. Because if you prevent your tongues from (saying) what Allah hates, this will be better for you with your Lord than that for which you sharpen your tongues. Because sharpening the tongue (to utter) what Allah abhors and what He prevents (you) from causes disobedience for the servant with Allah, and hatred from Him.

So, Allah will bring on him deafness, dumbness, and blindness on the Day of Judgment so, you become as Allah has said: "deaf, dumb (and) blind, so they do not understand." Namely, they will not utter, nor will they be allowed to apologize. Keep silent (from everything) except that which Allah avails you with in your next life and reward you for Implore Allah very much, for Allah likes His believing servants to Implore Him, and He has promised His

believing servants to accept (their supplication), and Allah will turn the du'a' of the believers into acts to increase (their rank) in Paradise So, remember Allah as far as possible at every hour of the hours of day and night, for Allah has ordered (you) to remember Him very much, and Allah remembers him who remembers Him of the believers Know that anyone of the believing servants remembers Allah, Allah remembers him with good So, do your best to obey Allah.

That is because nothing of good is obtained from Allah but through obeying Him and refraining from what He has prohibited in the Koran, whether they are open or secret He said in His Book and His Words are true: "And abandon open and secret sin." And know that Allah has prohibited what He has ordered you to refrain from Do not follow your desires and your ideas so that you go astray, for the most astray one of people in going with Allah is he who follows his desire and his idea without guidance from Allah. Do good to yourselves as far as possible, for 'if you do good, you will do good for your own souls, and if you do evil, it shall be for them.' know that Allah does not make a servant of His servants safe till he (the servant) is pleased with what Allah has done to him.

'Attend constantly to prayers and to the middle prayer and stand up truly obedient to Allah,' as Allah, in His Book, had ordered the believer before you.

Beware of might and glory, for glory is the attribute of Allah, the Great and Almighty. So, whoever shares Allah His attribute, Allah breaks him and humiliates him on the Day of judgment. Be careful not to wrong each other, for it (wrong) is not among the traits of the righteous, and for whoever wrongs the (others), Allah makes his wrong against him, the help of Allah will be to him who is wronged, whomever Allah helps is victorious and gets victory from Allah. Be careful not to envy each other, for the source of unbelief was envy.

Be careful not to help each other against the oppressed Muslim, so he invokes Allah against you and his invocation is accepted against you. That is because our father (i.e. grandfather) the Prophet of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, said: 'Indeed, the

supplication of the oppressed Muslim is accepted So, you should help each other, for our father the Prophet of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, said: 'Indeed, to help the Muslim is better and greater than to fast and to remain in the scared Mosque.'

Know that Islam (means) submission, and submission (means) Islam So, whoever submits to (Allah) becomes Muslim; whoever does not submit to (Allah) is not Muslim And whoever wants to do good to himself, then he should obey Allah Indeed, whoever obeys Allah does good to himself. Be careful not to disobey Allah, for whoever disobeys Allah does evil to himself Accordingly, there is a great difference between good and evil- the good people will obtain Paradise from their Lord; the wicked will obtain fire from their Lord Therefore, obey Allah and a void disobeying Him."

I (the author) say: These commandments are long. So, we have mentioned some of them. It has been mentioned in the book 'Roudat al- Kafi by al- Kulayni, may his grave be fragrant. About these commandments, al- Kulayni said: "Al- Sadiq, peace be on him, sent them to his companions and ordered them to study these commandments and to put them into practice. So, they put them in their houses. When they performed their prayers, they looked at them."

❖ His Commandments to Abd Allah Bin Jundub:

Abd Allah b Jundub al- Bajali al- Kufi was the Companion of al- Sadiq, al- Kazim, and al- Rida, peace be on them. He was the agent of al- Kazim and al- Rida. He was a worshipper, and his rank was very important for the Imams. In his book 'al- Rijal', al- Kashy has mentioned that Abd Allah b. Jundub said to Abu al- Hasan, peace be on him: "Are you satisfied with me?" Abu al- Hasan answered: "By Allah, yes. Allah and His Apostle are satisfied with you, too."

Al- Sadiq gave him commandments which have valuable sermons. We have mentioned some of them. He, peace be on him, said: 'Bin Jundub, he who depends on his deed perishes, and he who commits sins is not saved with Allah's mercy.'" Bin Jundub said: "Then, who is saved?" Al- Sadiq said: "Those who are between fear

and hope. It is as if that their hearts were in the claws of the bird because of their eagerness for the reward and fear of chastisement."

"Bin Jundub, Whoever is pleased with that Allah will marry him to young ladies having eyes with a marked contrast between white and black, and crown him with the light, then must delight his believing brother."

"Bin Jundub, the Satan has snares with which he catch (people). So, beware of his snares and nets." He (Bin Jundub) said: "Son of the Prophet of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, what are his snares and nets?" He (al- Sadiq) said: "As for his snares, he (the Satan) prevent (you) from treating the brothers kindly, and as for his nets, he (orders you) to sleep during the time of the prayers which Allah has imposed (on you) Indeed, to move the feet to visit the brothers and to treat them kindly is the best way to worship Allah. Woe unto those who are heedless from the prayers, who sleep during the time of the prayers, who mock at Allah and His verses in the Qoran, 'Surely they shall have no portion in the hereafter, and Allah will not speak to them, nor will he look at them on the Day of Resurrection nor will He purify them, and they shall have a painful chastisement.'"

"Bin Jundub, whoever runs to fulfill the need of his brother is like him who runs between Safa and Marwa, and whoever fulfills his need is like him who sacrifice his blood in the way of Allah on the day of the (Battle) of Badr and 'Uhud, and Allah did not punish any nation but when it disdained the rights of their poor brothers."

"Bin Jundub, if you wish like to neighbor the Great (Allah) in His House and dwell Paradise near him, then regard the life in this world as low, remember death frequently, do not save up (money) for tomorrow, and know that what you have advanced is for you, and what you have delayed is against you."

"Bin Jundub, whoever deprives himself of his earn, indeed, collects to other than him, whoever obeys his whim, surely, obeys his enemy, and whoever fears Allah, Allah guarantees what has made him worried in here and the hereafter and keeps for him what has

disappeared from him. Feeble is he who does not prepare patience for every tribulation, gratefulness for every blessing, and ease for every hardship. Habituate yourself to every misfortune in child, money and progeny Indeed, He (Allah) takes His loan and takes His gift to try with them your patience and your gratefulness. Hope Allah the hope which does not lead to disobedience and fear Him the fear which does not dash your hope of his mercy. Do not be deceived by he words of the ignorant nor with their praise, for you will be proud, haughty, and conceited with your deeds. Indeed, the best acts are worship and humbleness.

Do not lose your property, which you will leave after your death, to reform the property of others, Be satisfied with what Allah has predestined for you. Do not look but at what you have. Do not wish for what you cannot obtain, for whoever gets satisfied gets full, and whoever is dissatisfied is not full. Take your portion from your life in the hereafter. Do not be ungrateful during riches, nor be impatient during poverty. Do not be rude that people hate your nearness. Do not be feeble lest he who knows you should disdain you.

Do not dispute with those who are superior to you. Do not scorn those who are inferior to you. Do not dispute with the people of authority. Do not obey the foolish. Think of every matter before you start to know its beginning and its end. Regard your self as an enemy to make it good. If you do a person a favor, do not spoil it with much reminding. Rather, do a better one than it, for that makes your manner good and achieves your reward in the hereafter. And cleave to silence to be regarded as meek whether your are ignorant or knowledgeable. Indeed, silence is good with the knowledgeable and as a cover for you with the ignorant."

Al- Sadiq, peace be on him, quoted here some commandments of 'Isa (Jesus), peace be on him, to his companions: "And beware of looking, for it plant an appetite in the heart. It is an enough trail for its owner. Blessed is he who puts his sight in his heart and does not put his sight in his eye. Do not consider the defects of people as masters, and consider their defects as servants. Indeed, people are inflected and healthy. So, have mercy on the inflected and thank Allah for health."

Then he, peace be on him, said: "Bin Jundub, visit him who abandons you, give him who deprives you (of your right), treat kindly him who mistreats you, greet him who abuses you, do justice to him who quarrels with you, and forgive him who wrongs you as you want him to forgive you.

So, take a lesson from Allah's forgiveness for you. Do you not see that His sun shines over the chaste and the unchaste and His rain comes down to the righteous and the sinners."

"Bin Jundub, Islam is naked, so its clothe is modesty, its embellishment is solemnity, its manhood is the good deed, and its pillar is piety. Everything has a foundation; the foundation of Islam is our love, we, the (ahl al Bayt)."(369)

- **His Commandments to Abd Allah al- Najashi in the Same Letter:**

Abd Allah b Sulayman al- Nawfali said: "I was sitting with Ja'far b. Mohammed al- Sadiq. Suddenly, the servant of Abd Allah al- Najashi came to al- Sadiq He greeted him and handed him a letter Al- Sadiq opened the letter and read it. The letter read as follows:

"In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, may Allah prolong the life of my master, and may He make me ransom for him I have been inflected by the State of al- Ahwaz I want my master to limit a punishment for me or to give me an example to use it as a proof for what makes me nearer to Allah, the Great and Almighty, and to His Apostle I want him to sum up, in his letter: What does he think for me to put into effect? In what does he spend it? And in what shall I spend it?

Where should I put my Zakat (alms)? In what shall I spend it? With whom shall I associate? With whom shall I be happy? Whom shall I entrust, believe in, resort to concerning my secrets? Indeed, you are the Proof of Allah for his creation and His trustee of authority in His country (i.e. the earth), may Allah bestow His blessing upon you."

Abd Allah b Sulayman said: "Abu Abd Allah (al- Sadiq), peace be on him, answered him.":

"In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, may Allah compliment you with His good deed, be kind to you with His favor, and guard you with His care Indeed, He is the Supporter of that Now then, your messenger came to me with your letter I have read it and understood what you have mentioned and asked about.

You have claimed that you have been inflected by the State of al-Ahwaz. So, that has delighted me and grieved me. As for my delight at your ruling, I have said: May Allah help and strengthen with you a grieved (person) from the supporters of the Family. And as for my grief, I am afraid that you might mistreat a support of us, so you will not obtain the mercy of the Holy Being (Allah).

I am going to summarize to you all what you have asked about. If you put them into effect and do not exceed them, I hope you shall be saved, Allah willing My father told me on the authority of his grandfathers on the authority of 'Ali b. Abu Talib, peace be on them, on the authority of the Prophet of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, who said: 'Whomever his believing brother asks the advice of him but does not show him sincere advice, Allah deprives him of his intellect. Know that I am going to advise you.

If you put my advice into effect, you will get rid of what you are afraid of. Know that you are able to accomplish your rescue and your salvation when you refrain from shedding blood and harming the supporters of Allah, through treating subjects kindly, with patience and good friendship, with leniency without weakness and strength without violence. Complying with the moods of your companion and his messengers who come to you, and treat your subjects according to justice and equity, Allah willing.

Beware of slanderers, do not let anyone cleave to you, do not let Allah see you accepting (their words) absolutely, while you do not do justice to people. So, Allah will be angry with you and disgrace you. As for him whom you rely on, satisfied with, and entrust with to carry out your affairs should be experienced, clear- sighted trustee, He should agree with you on your religion, know your

subjects, and try the two parties. So, if you find such a person, then depend on him.

Be careful not to give even a dirham or take off a garment in the manner that displeases Allah to a poet, a comedian, and a joker, in this condition you should give the same (sum of many) to please Allah.

Your prizes, bonuses, and robes of honor should be given to leaders, messengers, grandsons, postmen, the police, and the collectors of Chomps (fifth). As for the money which you want to spend in the fields of righteousness, success, generosity, alms, hajj, drinking water, the garment you use during prayers, and the gift which you offer for Allah, the Great and Almighty and for his Apostle, my Allah bless him and his family, should be from your most lawful earn.

Abd Allah, spare no effort to avoid hoarding up gold and silver so as not to be among those about whom Allah, the Great and Almighty, says: 'And (as for) those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allah's way.'

Do not regard as little those remnants of food. Spend them to full the empty abdomens to clam the anger of Allah, the Blessed and Exalted. Know that I have heard my father reporting a tradition on the authority of his grandfathers, on the authority of 'Ali b Abi Talib, on the authority of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, who said: 'Whoever spends his night full, while his neighbor is hungry has not believed in Allah and the Next Day (the hereafter).' So, we said, 'Allah's Apostle, we have been ruined!" He said: 'You can put out the anger of the Lord with the remnants of your dates, your living, and your worn- out pieces of cloth ' Amir al- Mu'minin (Imam 'Ali) went out of this world while he had no responsibility for anyone till he met Allah praised- unblamed nor dispraised.

Then the Imams after him followed his example as you have known. They (the Imams) did not stain themselves with anything of the worldly calamities, may Allah bless them all and make their abodes good.

I have sent you the noble deeds of this world and the future one. If you put my advice into effect, I hope that Allah, the Great and Almighty, will forgive you all your sins with His power, even if they are as heavy as the mountains or as the waves of the seas.

Abd Allah, be careful not to scare a believer, for my father Mohammed told me on the authority of his father, on the authority of his grandfather 'Ali b. Abu Talib, peace be on him, who said: 'Whoever looks at a believer to scare him, Allah will scare him on that day when there will be no protection but His protection and gather his flesh, his body, and all his member in the shape of the small ants till He (Allah) brings him to his ruin.'

My father told me on the authority of his grandfathers, on the authority of 'Ali, on the authority of the Prophet, my Allah bless him and his family, who said: 'Whoever helps a grieved believer, Allah will help him on that day when there will be no protection but His protection, make him safe on the Day of the Great Scare, and make him safe from the evil consequence. Whoever fulfills a need for his believing brother, Allah fulfills many needs for him, among them is Paradise.

Whoever clothes his believing brother (to cover) his nakedness, Allah will clothe him from the sacrament of Paradise and from its brocade and its silk. And he will go on enjoining himself with the pleasure of Allah as long as there is a piece of thread on the clothed person.

Whoever feeds his brother, Allah will feed him from the good provisions of Paradise. Whoever waters his brother, Allah will water him from the sealed nectar. Whoever serves his brother, Allah will make the Immortal boys to serve him, and dwells him with His pure friends.

Whoever carries his believing brother from the saddle of his (animal), Allah will carry him on a she- camel of the she- camels of Paradise and vie him in glory with the close angels on the Day of judgment. Whoever marries his believing brother to a woman whom he depends on, who helps him, and with whom he is pleased, Allah will marry him to one of the pure, beautiful girls (in

Paradise), and entertains him with the truthful ones of his family and his brothers.

Also he (Allah) will entertain him with them. Whoever helps his believing brother against an oppressive ruler, Allah will help him pass the road (on the day when) the legs shake (with fear). And whoever visits his believing brother in his house not for a need, Allah will regard him as one of the visitors of (His Scared House), and it will be a must on Allah to honor His visitors.

Abd Allah, my father told me on the authority of his grandfathers on the authority of 'Ali b. Abu Talib, peace be on him, on the authority of the Prophet of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, that he, one day, said to his companions: 'Men, whoever curses (people) with his tongue and does not believe (in Allah) in his heart is not a believer. Do not look for the defects of the believers, for whoever looks for the defects of a believer, Allah will look for his defects on the Day of judgment and expose him in his house.

My father told me on the authority of 'Ali, peace be on him, who said: "Allah had taken a promise from the believer that people do not believe his words, nor does he take revenge on his enemy, nor does he quench his anger but through exposing himself to scandal, for every believer is controlled, that is for a short purpose and long rest."

"Allah had taken a promise from the believer (to conform to) things. The simplest one of them is (that) a believer like him (who) believes in his thought makes him tired, envies him, and the Satan tempts him (the second believer) and helps him. The ruler follows his acts (the acts of the first believer) and his mistakes He (the ruler) disbelieves in what he (the first believer) believes. He (the ruler) thinks that shedding his blood is a must and violating his sacredness as booty, then is the life of the believer (important) after these things?"

Abd Allah, my father told me on the authority of his grandfathers, on the authority of 'Ali b. Abu Talib, peace be on him, on the authority of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, that

he said: 'Gabriel, peace be on him, came down and said: Mohammed, Allah has sent His regards to you and said: I have derived a name from My Names for the believer. I have called him believer. The believer is from Me and I am from the believer. Whoever disdains a believer, surely, wages war against me.

Abd Allah, my father told me on the authority of his grandfathers, peace be on them, on the authority of 'Ali, peace be on him, on the authority of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, who, one day, said: 'Ali, do not debate with a man till you know his inner self If his inner self is good, Allah, the Great and Almighty, does not forsake His supporter. And if his inner self is evil, his counterpart is enough for him. You are not able (to convince him) even if you do your best to do (deeds) more than he does, not to disobey Allah, the Great and Almighty.

Abd Allah, my father told me on the authority of his grandfathers on the authority of 'Ali, peace be on him, on the authority of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, who said: 'The minimum (degree) of unbelief is that the person hears a word from his brother, to memorize it against him so as to expose him with it Such a person shall have no portion (in the hereafter).'

Abd Allah, my father told me on the authority of his fathers on the authority of 'Ali, peace be on him, who said: 'Whoever says about the believer what his eyes do not see and his ears do not hear to disgrace him and to destroy his manhood is among those about him Allah, the Great and Almighty, says: Surely (as for) those who love that scandal should circulate respecting those who believe, they shall have a grievous chastisement.'

Abd Allah, my father told on the authority of his grandfathers on the authority of 'Ali, peace be on him, who said: 'Whoever reports a story about his believing brother to demolish his manhood and to defame him, Allah will degrade him with his sin till he brings an excuse for what he has said and will never bring the excuse Whoever delights his believing brother, delights (ahl al Bayt), peace be on them.

Whoever delights (ahl al Bayt), delights Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family And whoever delights Allah's Apostle delights Allah. So, it is a must on Him to make him enter Paradise.

Then I advise you to fear Allah and to hold fast to His religion, for whoever holds fast to the religion of Allah is guided to the straight Path (of Islam). So, fear Allah and do not prefer anyone to His pleasure and will. That is because it is the commandment of Allah, the Great and Almighty, to His creation He (Allah) does not accept anything from them except it nor does He regard anything as great but it Know that the creatures have not been authorized to do anything greater than to fear Allah Also it is our commandment, we, (ahl al Bayt). If you are able to refrain from doing the deeds about which you will be asked tomorrow, then do."

Abd Allah b Sulayman said: "When al- Najashy received the letter of al- Sadiq, peace be on him, he looked at it and said: By Allah with whom there is no good but Him, my master (al- Sadiq) is truthful. Whoever puts into effect what has been written in this letter is saved. So, Abd Allah went on acting according to this letter throughout his lifetime.

❖ Some of His Commandments to His Shi'a:

Zayd al- Shahham said: Abu Abd Allah said to me: "Send my greetings to those of you who obey me and act according to my words. I advise you to fear Allah, the Great and Almighty, to cleave to piety in your religion, to make every effort for Allah, to be truthful in your talks, to give the trusts, to perform long adoration, and to treat your neighbors kindly, for Mohammed, may Allah bless him and his family, came to put these manners into effect.

Give the trust to him who entrusts you with them whether he is righteous or mischievous, for Allah's Apostle ordered (the Muslims) to pay the piece of thread and the needle, keep close relations with tribes, attend their escorting of their deceased, visit their ill ones, give them their rights, for if the person of you becomes pious in his religion, is truthful in his talks, gives the trust, and his manners are good, (people) will say: This is the education of Ja'far. This pleases me Otherwise, (people) will say: This is the education of Ja'far.

In this case, the tribulation and the disgrace are attributed to me By Allah, my father told me that a follower of 'Ali, peace be on him, was in a certain tribe.

There, he was the best one: He gave the trust, and gave the rights He was the most truthful one in talks. So, he was the shelter of their wills and trusts. The tribe asked about him and said: Who is like him? He is the most honest of us in giving the trust. And the most truthful of us in talking"

❖ **His Commandments to Mu'min al- Taq:**

Al- Sadiq, peace be on him said: "Bin al- Nu'man, beware of doubt, for it foils your act. Beware of the argument, for it humiliates you. And Beware of many quarrels, for they take you away from Allah. Those who were before you learned silence, while you learn the speech. When anyone of them wanted to worship, he learned silence ten years before that. If he had learned it, he would have worshipped; otherwise he said: I am not worthy of what I am seeking.

Indeed, saved is he who prolongs silence to refrain from obscenity and endures harm in the state of falsehood. It is they who were the highborn, the honest, the true followers, and the believing. By Allah, if someone of you offers gold as much as the earth, and then envies a believer, that gold will be of that with which he will be burnt in the fire.

Bin al- Nu'man, when someone is asked about knowledge and says: I do not know. Indeed, he shares knowledge equally with (the knowledgeable). The believer envies during his sitting, but when he stands up, envy disappears from him.

Bin al- Nu'man, if you want the love of your brother to be pure for you, then do not joke with him, do not argue with him, do not vie in glory with him, and do not quarrel with him. Do not tell your friend about your secret except that which does not harm you when the enemy knows it, for the friend might be an enemy someday.

Bin al- Nu'man, eloquence is not the sharp tongue nor much talk. Rather, it is giving the meaning or producing evidence."

❖ **His Commandments to Hamran Bin A'yun:**

Al- Sadiq, peace be on him, said: "Hamran, look at those who are inferior to you; do not look at those who are superior to you in ability, for that makes you satisfied with what has been predestined for you, and it is more appropriate for you to get an addition (in your reward) from your Lord. Know that a few constant acts with conviction are better with Allah than many acts without conviction. Know that there is no piety more useful than refraining from harming the believers and their backbiting, nor is living more comfortable than good manners, nor is property more useful than satisfaction with the a few profitable (things), nor is ignorance more harmful than vanity."

❖ **His Commandments to al- Mufaddal Bin 'Amr':**

I advise you and my own self to tear Allah and to obey Him, for from fearing Allah result obedience, piety, humbleness for Allah, tranquillity, diligence, putting His orders into effect, faithfulness to His Apostle, hastening toward His pleasure, and refraining from what He has prohibited.

Indeed, whoever fears Allah saves himself from the fire with the permission of Allah and obtains all good in here and the hereafter. And whoever orders (people) to fear Allah succeeds in the sermon. May Allah make us from those who fear Him with His permission."

❖ **His Commandments to Jamil Bin Darraj:**

Al- Sadiq, peace be on him, said to Jamil b. Darraj: "The good ones of you are the generous and the bad ones of you are the miserly. Among the good deeds are to treat the brothers kindly and to fulfill their needs, for these (acts) force the Satan (to turn away from you) and save you from the fires and make you enter Paradise Jamil, tell your honorable companions about this tradition He (Jamil) said: I (i.e. Jamil) said to him: 'May I be your ransom, who are my honorable companions?'

He, peace be on him, said: Those who treat the brothers with kindness during poverty and riches."

He (al- Sadiq) said: "Jamil, this (act) is easy for the doer of the favor. Allah, the Great and Almighty, has praised the doer of the little (favor). He (Allah) said: 'And prefer (others) to themselves though poverty may afflict them, and whoever is preserved from the niggardliness of his soul, these it is that are the successful ones.'"

❖ His Commandments to al- Ma'alla Bin Khanis:

When al- Ma'alla b, Khanis wanted to travel, al- Sadiq, peace be on him, said to him: "Ma'alla, be powerful with Allah." He (al- Ma'alla) said: "With What, son of the Apostle of Allah (my Allah bless him and his family)?" He, peace be on him, said: "Fear Allah, the Exalted He makes everything afraid of you.

Ma'alla, show love to your brothers through giving them gifts, for Allah, the Exalted, has made the gift love and prevention hatred By Allah, if you ask me for (something) and I give you it is more desirable with me than that you do not ask me for (a thing) and I do not give you, so you hate me. Whatever Allah, the Great and Almighty, has given you through my hands, still the laudable one is Allah, the Exalted. However, do not forget to thank for what Allah has given you through my hands."

❖ His Commandments to sufyan al- Thawri:

Syfyan said: "I met the Truthful one, the son of the Truthful one, Ja'far b. Mohammed, peace be on them. I (i.e. Sufyan) said: Son of the Apostle of Allah, advise me. He said to me: 'Sufyan, the liar has no manhood; the tired (person) has no brother, the envious (person) has no rest, and the ill-natured (person) has no rightness.'"

I (Sufyan) said: "Son of the Apostle of Allah, Allah bless him and his family, add more. He said to me: 'Entrust Allah to be a believer. Be satisfied with what Allah has allotted to you to be rich. Treat your neighbor with kindness to be Muslim. Do not make friends

with the sinner so as not to teach you from his sin. Concerning your affairs, ask the advice of those who fear Allah.'"

I (Sufyan) said: "Son of the Apostle of Allah, add more. He said to me: 'Sufyan, whoever wants glory without a tribe, riches without money, and dignity without authority, then should move from the humiliation of the disobedience of Allah to the strength of His obedience.'"

He (i.e. Sufyan) said once to al- Sadiq: "I do not go till you tell me (some pieces of advice)." He (al- Sadiq) said to him: 'I will tell you, for talking with you is good. Sufyan, If Allah bestows a certain blessing upon you, and if you want this blessing to last, then praise and laud (Allah) for it very much, for Allah, the Great and Almighty, has said in His Book: If you are grateful, I would certainly give to you more.(383) And if you feel that your sustenance is slow, then ask Allah's forgiveness for much, for Allah, the Great and Almighty, has said in His Book: Ask forgiveness of your Lord, surely He is the most Forgiving. He will send down upon you the cloud, pouring down abundance of rain And help you with wealth and sons, and make for you gardens, and make for you rivers.'"

"Sufyan, when the ruler or others cause a certain matter to sadden you, say: There is neither might nor power but with Allah, for it is the key of ease and treasure of the treasures of Paradise. So, Sufyan said: 'What excellent three these are!'

❖ His Commandments to 'Inwan al- Basri:

'Inwan al- Basri disagreed with Malik b. Anas on his ideas. So, he wanted to learn from al- Sadiq, peace be on him. When he came to al-Sadiq, al- Sadiq said to him: "I am a wanted man. However, I have parts of the Holy Koran at every hour during night and day. So, do not busy me from these parts." He ('Inwan) said: "I became sad, so I entered the Mosque of the Prophet of Allah, peace be on him, and greeted him."

Then I did two ruk'ats and said: "Allah! Allah! I ask You to Make Ja'far's knowledge to follow Your straight path." When my patience was over, and my heart became narrow, I went to Ja'far. When I

reached his house, I knocked on the door A servant came out The servant said: "What is your need?" I ('Inwan) said: "peace be on the Sharif."

The servant said: "He is performing his prayers." So, I sat at the door. Immediately, the servant came out and said: "Come in with the blessing of Allah." I came in and greeted him (al- Sadiq). He greeted me and said: "Sit down, may Allah forgive you (your sins)" So, I sat down He bowed his head for a long time. Then he raised his head and said: "What is your kunya?" " Abu Abd Allah," I said: "May Allah fix your kunya and grant you success. What is your question?" I said to myself: "This du'a' is very much for me." Then he raised his head and said: "What is your question?" I said: "I asked Allah to incline your heart to me and give me some of your knowledge. I hope that Allah has accepted my supplication."

He (al- Sadiq) said: "Abu Abd Allah, knowledge is not obtained through learning; Rather, It is light falls into the heart of the person whom Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, wants to guide. If you want knowledge, then ask the truth of worship in yourself, seek knowledge through using it, and ask Allah to make you understand it." I said: "Sharif!" He said: "Do not say Sharif, say Abu Abd Allah." I said: "What is the truth of worship?" He said: "three things: the servant should not regard himself asking in what Allah has authorized him, for the servants have no authority.

They think that wealth belong to Allah. They use it in the fields where He has ordered them to. So, the servant has no right in this wealth All he has is that he should carry out what Allah has ordered him and to refrain from what He has prohibited So, when the servant thinks that he has no right in what Allah has authorized him, spending in the fields where Allah has ordered him to spend is easy for him. When the servant authorizes his master to manage him, the misfortunes of this world are easy for him.

When the servant busies himself with what Allah has ordered him to do, while have no leisure time to argue with people or vie with them in glory. When Allah honors the servant with these three things, life in this world, Iblis (the Satan), and the creation are all easy for him.

Besides, he does not request the life in this world to increase (his money) or vie with (people) in glory, nor does he request what people have for power and the high position, and nor does he make his days go in vain. So, this is the first degree of religious devotion Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, said: '(As for) that future abode, We assign it to those who have no desire to exalt themselves in the earth nor to make mischief and the good end is for those who guard (against evil).'" I ('Inwan) said: "Abu Abd Allah, advise me." He said: "I will advise you (to do) nine things, for they are to those who want to follow the Straight path of Allah.

I ask Allah to grant you success to put them into effect. Three of them in the spiritual exercise; three of them in clemency, and three of them in knowledge Memorize them and be careful not neglect them." "Inwan said: "So, I made my heart empty." He (al- Sadiq) said: "As for those concerning the spiritual exercise, be careful not to eat what you do not feel appetite for, because it brings about foolishness and stupidity.

Do not eat except when you are hungry. When you eat, eat lawful (food), say: Bismillahr rahmanir rahim, and call to mind the following tradition of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family.' The person does not full a container more evil than his stomach. However, if it is necessary, (follow these portions): third for food, third for water, and third for breathing.'

As for those concerning clemency, whoever says to you: If you say one time, I have heard ten times. Say to him: If you say ten times, you have heard none. Whoever abuses you, say to him: If you are truthful in what you say, then ask Allah to forgive me. And if you tell lies in what you say, then I ask Allah to forgive you. Whoever threatens you with obscene language, give him a piece of advice and take care of him. And as for those concerning knowledge, ask the knowledgeable about what you do not know.

Be careful not to ask them to confuse or try them. Be careful not to do anything according to your opinion. Act according to precaution in all what you cannot find a way to it. Escape from giving a religious opinion, and do not make your neck as a bridge for people. Now, Abu Abd Allah, leave me, for I have given you pieces

of advice. Do not spoil my reciting to the parts of the Koran, for I am sticking to them, and peace be on those who follow guidance."

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IMAM AL-SADEQ'S SHORT SAYINGS

1. Intellect is that with which people worship the Most Gracious (Allah) and with which they obtain gardens.

2. Verily, the reward is equal to intellect.

3. The most perfect of men in intellect is the best of them in ethics.

4. Intellect is the pillar of man.

5. Intellect is the guide of the believer.

6. The perfection of intellect is in three (things): humbleness for Allah, good certainty, and silence except for good.

7. Ignorance is in three (things): Haughtiness, the intense of dispute, and the ignorance in Allah.

8. The best nature of intellect is worship, the strongest speech for it is knowledge, and its most abundant luck is maxim.

9. To consider knowledge very much opens intellect.

10. Knowledge is a shield, truthfulness is might, ignorance is abasement, understanding is glory, generosity is success, good behavior causes friendship, he who has knowledge about his time, ambiguous things do not attack him, and determination is mistrust.

11. If you want that you are honored, then be soft. And if you want that you are abused, then be rough.

12. He whose origin is noble, his heart is soft, and he whose race is rough, his liver is thick.

13. Whoever is extreme gets involved, and whoever is afraid of the consequence refrains from entering what he does not know.

14. Whoever attacks a matter without knowledge cuts off his own nose.

15. Scholars are trustees, the Allah- fearing are strongholds, and guardians are masters.

16. Verily, knowledge is a lock and its key is the question.

17. Whoever acts without prescience is like the walker without way, the speed of walking does not increase him but farness.

18. Allah does not accept any act without knowledge, there is no knowledge without act, so whoever knows, knowledge leads him to act, and whoever does not act gets no knowledge, but belief is a little of a little.

19. The favor is not perfected but with three (things): by doing it quickly, debasing it, and hiding it.

20. Not everyone who sees a thing is able to do it, not everyone who is able to do a thing is successful in doing it, and not everyone who is successful in it. When intention, ability, success, and righteousness come together, happiness occurs.

21. Four things of which little is much: Fire, enmity, poverty, and illness.

22. Twenty- day- friendship is a relationship.

23. Whoever does not feel shame during absence and does not repent during old age and does not fear Allah during loneliness, then he has no good.

24. Whoever honors you, then honor him. And whoever scorns you, then honor yourself from him.

25. To forbid generosity is mistrust in Allah.

26. Verily, the family of a person are his prisoners, so whomever is bestowed upon him, then he should be generous toward them, and if he does not (do that), that favor is about to disappear from him.

27. Three (things) with which Allah does not increase the Muslim person but glory: To forgive him who wrongs him; to give him who deprives him, to visit him who abandons him.

28. When the believer becomes angry, his anger should not take him out of the truth; and when he becomes satisfied, his satisfaction should not bring him in falsehood.

29. Friendship has five conditions. Whoever has them, then attribute him to it. Whoever has not them, then do not attribute him to any of it. They are: the good of his friend should be his good, his inward thoughts for him should be like his openness, no money should change him against him, he should hold the view that he is worthy of all his friendship, and should not abandon him during misfortunes.

30. The noble man should not turn up his nose at four (things): his standing from his sitting for his father, his service for his guest, taking care of his riding animal even if he has a hundred slaves, and his service for his teacher.

31. (Religious) scholars are the trustees of prophets unless they come to the doors of supreme rulers.

32. A man from the people of Iraq (ahl al- Sawad) went to him (al-Sadiq) frequently, then he broke away from him, So he (the Imam) asked some people about him. To detract from him, one of them said: "He is Nabati." So, he (the Imam), peace be on him, said: "The origin of the man is his intellect, his ancestry is his religion, his generosity is his piety, and men are equal in Adam (Adam)."

33. Noble deeds are ten, if you want them to be with you, then let them be, they are with the man and are not with his children; they are with the child and are not with his father; they are with the slave and are not with the master. What are they? He, peace be on him, said: the truthfulness of men, the truthfulness of the tongue,

paying the trust, linking the relatives on the maternal side, entertaining the guest, giving food to the beggar, rewarding the favors, to avoid blaming the neighbor, to avoid censuring the friend, and their head is modesty.

34. Some of the correctness of the belief of the Muslim person is that he should not please men through angering Allah, and do not blame them for what Allah has not given him, because the miserliness of the miserly does not drive livelihood, and the hatred of the hater does not live it away, and if one of you escaped from his livelihood as he escapes from death, his livelihood would reach him as death reaches him.

35. Verily, with his justice, Allah has put comfort and ease in certainty and satisfaction, and put worry and sorrow in doubt and anger.

36. The head of the obedience of Allah is patience and pleasure for what Allah likes and dislikes for the servant, and if the servant is satisfied with what Allah likes and dislikes for him, it will be good for him in what He likes and dislikes.

37. Indeed, the most knowledge of all men in Allah is the most satisfied of them with death.

38. Do not backbite, so you are backbited, and do not dig a judge you would be judged by.

39. Be ware of joking because it loses face and the dignity of men.

40. Do not dispute, so your glory goes, and do not joke, so you are dared (so men dare to say rude things about you).

41. Be ware of the dispute because it brings about the hateful ugly thing and shows the defect.

42. Whoever is not shy of seeking legal livelihood, his provisions is light, and his family leads a life of ease and comfort.

43. I wonder at him who is miserly for life in this world and it is coming towards him or is miserly in it and it is turning away from him , so neither spending with coming harms him nor miserliness with turning away avails him.

44. The prisoner is he whose life in this world imprisons him from his next life.

45. Do not make your hearts busy thinking about bygone, so you divert your minds from getting ready to what has not come yet.

46. Seek livelihood by giving alms, guard your wealth by Zakat, he who is moderate does not become destitute, organization is half livelihood, loving one another is half wisdom, small family is one of the ways of (securing) ease, whoever saddens his parents certainly is disobedient to them, favor is not favor but with him who has ancestry and religion, Allah, the Exalted, sends down endurance according to the affliction and livelihood according to the provisions, whoever appreciates his livelihood, Allah, the Exalted, gives him, and whoever wastes his livelihood, Allah, the Exalted, deprives him (of that).

47. The richest riches is he who is not captive for greed.

48. Nothing is better than silence, no enemy is more harmful than ignorance, and no illness is more dangerous than telling lies.

49. Three (things) with which no thing is harmful: The prayers during distress, asking Allah's forgiveness during the sin, and thankfulness during the blessing.

50. The believer is popular, and there is no good in him who neither associates nor is associated.

51. It was said (to him): What is good behavior? He, peace be on him, said: Make yourself gentle, make your words good, and receive your brother with cheerfulness.

52. He whose tongue is truthful his act grows, he whose intention is good his livelihood is increased, and he whose charity is good for the members of his house his age is prolonged.

53. Modesty is (a part) of belief.

54. He whose face is soft his knowledge is soft.

55. He who has no modesty has no belief.

56. Three (things) are of the noble acts of here and hereafter: Forgive him who has wronged you, visit him who has abandoned you, and be patient when you are treated with ignorance.

57. Any members of a house are given their luck of gentleness most surely Allah increases their livelihood, gentleness in appreciating livelihood is better than the increase of money, nothing lacks strength for gentleness, nothing stays with wastefulness, Indeed, Allah, the Great and Almighty, is gentle He loves gentleness.

58. Whoever is gentle in (obtaining) his matter obtains what he wants from men.

59. Whoever is satisfied with what Allah has given him then is the richest of men.

60. A man complained to him (al- Sadiq) that he sought (his livelihood) and earned but he was not satisfied, and his soul contended with him at pulling (to earn) more, and he said: Teach me a thing to avail myself of, so Abu Abd Allah, peace be on him, said: If what suffices you makes you rich, then the smallest thing in this world makes you rich And if what suffices you does not make you rich, then all things in this world do not make you rich.

61. Justice is sweeter than the water the thirsty (person) have.

62. How wide justice is even if it is very little.

63. Whoever treats men with justice is accepted as judge for others.

64. The honor of a believer is to pray at night, and his dignity is to be in no need of men.

65. To request needs from men takes dignity and removes modesty, and to despair of what is in the hands of men is glory for the believer in his religion.

66. To visit blood relatives improves manners, makes the self good, increases livelihood, and delays death.

67. It is enough that patience is a supporter.

68. If you are not patient, then pretend to be patient.

69. Whoever prevents his hand from men prevents only one hand and they prevent many hands.

70. It is enough that the person depends on his brother when he requests his need from him.

71. Alms Allah loves: To reconcile men after they have quarreled and bring them closer together after they have left each other.

72. Whoever treats people and does not wrong them, speaks to them and does not tell them lies, and promises them and does not break his promise, his backbiting is forbidden, his manhood is perfect, his justice appears, his brotherhood is a must.

73. Whoever requests leadership perishes.

74. Whoever sows enmity reaps what he has sown.

75. Anger is the key of every evil.

76. Anger is the destruction of the wise man.

77. Whoever does not control his anger does not control his intellect.

78. Verily, envy eats belief as fire eats wood.

79. The catastrophe of religion is envy, self- admiration, and boasting.

80. No one becomes haughty but because of abasement finds in himself.

81. What a bad believer is he who has a desire (that) abases him.

82. Foolishness is a mean nature, has the cheek to those who are below him, and yields to those who are superior to him.

83. Verily, (the things) of which Allah helps against the liars is forgetfulness.

84. Be ware of the slip of elaboration because it is not forgiven.

85. The best of men is he in whom five traits have come together: If he does well, he is cheerful; if he does badly, he asks forgiveness; if he is afflicted, he is patient, and if he is wronged, he forgives.

86. Abu Hanifa said to him (al- Sadiq): Abu Abd Allah, how patient you are during the prayers! He, peace be on him, said: Woe unto you! Nu'man, do not you know that the prayer is the sacrifice of the God- fearing, the hajj (pilgrim) is the jihad of the weak, everything has Zakat and the Zakat of the body is fasting, the best act is to wait the ease from Allah, the propagandist without act is like the archer without string? So, memorize these words, Nu'man.

87. I swear by Allah, three (things) are most surely true: No property decreases because of alms or Zakat, not anyone is wronged and is able to repay but controls it surely Allah recompense him glory instead, nor any slave opens the door of begging for himself surely Allah opens a door of poverty for him.

88. The manhood of a person in himself is a relationship to his children and his tribe.

89. Seven (persons) corrupt their own acts: The meek man with a lot of knowledge (who) is not known with that nor is mentioned with; the wise man whose property is managed by a liar (who) is ungrateful for what is given to him; the man who is safe from the possessor of cunning and treason; the rude master who has no mercy, the mother who does not keep the secret of the child and spreads it; the person who blames his brothers quickly, and he who argues with his brothers to quarrel with them.

90. Neither the possessor of haughtiness aims to good praise, nor does the deceiver to much truthfulness, nor does the Impolite (person) to honor, nor does the miser to linking blood relatives, nor does he who scorn men to sincere affection, nor does he who has little knowledge at jurisprudence to judgment, nor does the backbiter to safety, nor does the envier to the ease of the heart, nor does he who punishes (people) for the small mistake to correctness, nor does he who has little experience and is self-conceited to leadership.

91. He whose guard is determination, whose friend is truthfulness, his splendor is great, and his manhood is perfect.

92. A generous ignorant (person) is better than a miserly hermit.

93. Whoever requests more than his right is worthy of deprivation.

94 The worthiest of men in forgiveness is the ablest of them in punishment, and the most defective of men in intellect is he who wrongs those who are inferior to him and does not forgive him who apologizes to him.

95. Do not be the first consultant, and be ware of the unripe idea.

96. Investigation is discord.

97. Criticism is enmity.

98. The paucity of patience is a scandal.

100. Generosity is cleverness.

101. Meanness is heedlessness.

102. Whoever neglects three (things) is deprived: To request the favor of the generous person, to make friends with the scholar and to attract the ruler.

103. Three (things) cause affection: Religion, modesty, and generosity.

104. Whoever gets rid of evil gets glory; whoever gets rid of haughtiness gets dignity, and whoever gets rid of miserliness gets honor.

105. Three (things) cause hatred: hypocrisy, self admiration, and oppression.

106. Whoever has not a trait of three (traits) is not regarded as noble: Whoever has no intellect to make him good, or riches to help him, or a tribe to support him.

107. Three (things) abase the person: envy, slander, and recklessness.

108. Three (things) are not known but during three situations: The meek (person) is not known but during anger, nor is the brave (person) known but during war, nor is the brother known but during need.

109. Whoever has three (traits) is a hypocrite even if he prays or fasts: when he speaks, he tells lies, when he promises, he breaks (his promise), and when he is trusted, he betrays.

110. Beware of three (persons) of men: The traitor, the oppressor, and the slanderer, because he who betrays (his friend) for you will

betray you, whoever oppresses (his friend) for you will oppress you, and whoever slanders for you will slander against you.

111. The trusty (person) is not trusty but when he is trusted with three (things) and repays them: Properties, women, and children. If he keeps two (of them) and loses one, then he is not trusty.

112. Do not ask the advice of the foolish (person); do not seek the help of the liar, and do not trust the affection of the bored (person), because the liar approaches the far (things) for you and distances the close (things) for you; the foolish (person) does his best but does not reach what he wants and whatever you have confidence in the bored (person), he betrays you and whatever you send him gifts, he abandons you.

113. Four (things) are not full of four (things): a land of rain; an eye of looking; a female of male, and a scholar of knowledge.

114. Four (things) make (the person) grow old before the time of old age: Eating cured meat; sitting on moistness, going up with stairs, and having sexual intercourse with the old women.

115. Women are three (Kinds): One is for you; one is for you and against you, and one is against you not for you: As for the woman who is for you is the virgin woman, as for she who is for you and against you is the deflowered (woman), and as for she who is against you is al- Mutbi' who has a child from other than you.

116. Whoever has three (traits) is a master: Suppressing anger; forgiving the person who misbehaves, and linking with the self and property.

117. Eloquence is in three (things): To approach the meaning of the purpose, to avoid wordiness, and to prove the many (things) with the few (things).

118. Toil is in three (things): In changing the brothers; turning away (from each other), and spying about what does not mean (you).

119. Three (things) prevent (the person) from getting high positions: The shortness of determination; Shamelessness, and the weakness of the idea.

120. Determination is in three (things): The exploitation of sultan, the obedience to the father, and the yielding to the master.

121. Amusement is in three (things): In the agreeable wife; the obedient child, and the sincere friend.

122. Whomever is given three (things) obtains the greatest riches: The satisfaction in what he is given, the despair of what is in the hands of men, and leaving curiosity.

123. The person is not forgiven for three (things): The consultation of the adviser, willingness to please the envier, and showing affection to men.

124. Whoever does not wish for three (things) is afflicted by three (things): Whoever does not wish for safety is afflicted by abandonment; whoever does not wish for charity is afflicted by regret, and whoever does not wish for making many brothers (friends) is afflicted by loss.

125. Man should avoid three (things): Making friends with the evil; speaking to women, and sitting with the people of heresies.

126. Three (things) show the nobility of a person: Good behavior, suppressing anger, and lowering (of one's) glance.

127. Whoever is confident in three (things) is conceited: whoever believes in that which does not exist, depends on him who does not trust him, and wishes for what he has not.

128. Whoever uses three (things) corrupts his religion and his life in this world: Mistrust, reliance on hearing, and giving leadership to his wife.

129. The best of kings is he who has three traits: mercy, generosity, and justice.

130 Kings should not neglect three (things): defending borders; looking for complaints, and choosing the righteous for their acts.

131. The wise man should not scorn anyone, especially three (persons): the scholars, the supreme ruler, and the brothers (friends), because whoever scorns the scholars corrupts his religion; whoever scorns the supreme ruler corrupts his life in this world, and whoever scorns his brothers corrupts his manhood.

132. Men need three (things) very much: security, justice, and richness.

133. Three (things) trouble life: the oppressive ruler, the bad neighbor, and the abusive woman.

134. Living is not good but with three (things): fresh air, plentiful water, and the level land.

135. Whoever has three (things) is perfect: intellect, handsomeness, and eloquence.

136. Three (things) cause deprivation: the insistence on the request, backbiting, and mockery.

137. Whoever asks three (things) without rights deprived of three (things) without right: Whoever asks life in this world without right will be deprived of life in the hereafter with right; whoever asks leadership without right is deprived of obedience for him with right, and whoever asks property without right is deprived of its lasting for him with right.

138. The prudent person should not do three (things): Drinking poison for experiment even if he is saved from it; spreading the secret to the envious relatives even if he is saved from it, and traveling by sea even if there is riches in it.

139. The people of every country is in need of three (persons). They resort to them in the affair of their life in this world and in hereafter If they lose them, they are rabble: A Religious,

knowledgeable jurisprudent, good obeyed Emir, a knowing trusty doctor.

140. If men are safe from three (things), safety is common: a bad tongue, a bad hand, and a bad act.

141. If the slave has not one of three traits, then his master has no rest: religion guides him, good manners lead him, or fear holds him back.

142. The person needs three (things) in his house for his family. nice association, comfort with estimation, and sense of honor with chastity.

143. Whoever is afflicted by one of three (things) is weak minded: turning away blessing, corrupt wife, disaster of a dear one.

144. Bravery has been made according to three natures, each one of them have a virtue of which the other has not: generosity with the self, looking down upon abasement, and requesting reputation. If they come together in the brave (person), he will be the hero in whose way no one stands and marked by boldness in his time, and if they are superior to each other, his bravery will be in the nature that is superior to the others.

145. The child should fulfill three (things) for his parents: (He should) thank them anyhow, obey them in what they order him (to do) and prevent him from disobeying Allah, and (take) their advice secretly and openly.

146. And the father should fulfill three (things) for his child: (He should) choose his mother, give him a good name, and spare no effort to educate him.

147. Pleasure is in three (things): in faithfulness, conforming to the rights, and rising in misfortunes.

148. Three (things) show the right idea: the good meeting, good listening, and the good answer.

149. Men are three (kinds): a wise (man), a foolish (man), and a licentious (man)- if the wise (man) is asked, he answers. If he speaks, he says the right thing. And if he hears, he understands. If the foolish (man) speaks, he (speaks) in a hurry.

If he is told, he becomes astonished. And if he is ordered (to do) the disgraceful (things), he does (it). If you trust the licentious (man), he betrays you. And if you speak to him (about something), he disgraces you.

150. There is no estrangement with three (things): good behavior, refraining from harm, and avoiding doubt.

151. Days are three (kinds): so a day has passed; it cannot be repeated, a day when men are on it, so they must avail themselves of it, and tomorrow whose hope is in their hands only.

152. However has not three traits, his belief does not avail him: patience to refute the ignorance of the ignorant (person), fear of God to prevent him from seeking the forbidden, and good ethics to treat men kindly.

153. The brothers (the friends) are three (kinds): (The first kind) helps you with himself, (the second kind helps you) with his money- they are truthful in brother hood (friendship), and (the third kind) takes the purpose from you and wants you for some pleasure, then do not regard him as (one) of the people of trust.

154. The servant does not complete the truth of belief till he has three qualities: understanding in religion, good estimation in living, and patience for misfortunes.

155. Thank him who bestows upon you, and bestow upon him who thanks you, because the blessings do not end when you thank and they do not stay when you are ungrateful.

156. It was said to him (al- Sadiq): What is morality? So he, peace be on him, said: It is that Allah does not see you where He has forbidden you and does not miss you where He has ordered you.

157. Missing the need is better than requesting it from other than its people, and severer than the disaster is the bad consequence (that results) from it.

158. Surely, feeble is he who does not prepare patience for every disaster, thankfulness for every blessing, and ease for every difficulty.

159. The desirable are not increased but with thankfulness and the hateful are not decreased but with patience.

160. The most useful thing for a person is that he precedes men for his own defect, and the strongest of them in provisions is to conceal destitution, the severest thing in pains is to give advice to him who does not accept it and to neighbor the greedy (person), and the most comfortable thing is to despair of men.

161. Whoever puts himself in the place of accusation, then does not blame him who mistrusts him.

162. Whoever conceals his secret, good is in his hand, and every speech passes two (persons) is spreading.

163. Put the instruction of your brother in the best manner, and do not mistrust a word that comes out of your brother while you find a reason for it in the good.

164. Cleave to the brothers of truthfulness, because they are readiness during comfort and protection during the misfortune.

165. Some of good faith is knowledge, some of good knowledge is clemency, some of good clemency is fellowship, some of good fellowship is leniency, and some of good leniency is easiness.

166. Beautiful forgiveness is that you have not admonished for the sin, and beautiful patience is that which has no complaint.

167. Al- Mufaddal b. 'Amr asked him (al- Sadiq) about ancestry, so he, peace be on him, said: the property He (al- Mufaddal) said: so generosity, he, peace be on him, said: piety, he said: rightness, he,

peace be on him, said: generosity, woe unto you! Did you not know that how Hatam al- Ta'i became the master of his people while he was not the best of them in position.

168. Charity is the Zakat (alms) of blessings, intercession is the Zakat of dignity, illnesses are the Zakat of bodies, forgiveness is the Zakat of victory, and the thing whose Zakat is paid is safe from taking (by Allah).

169. Some manners of the ignorant (person) are: the answer before he hears, the opposition before he understands, and the judgment with what he does not know.

170. Your secret is (some) of your blood, then do not make it flow in other than your veins.

171. Your chest is wider for your secret.

172. Whoever does not make friends with him who has no defect his friends are very few, whoever is not satisfied with his friend but (that his friend) prefers him to himself his wrath lasts, and whoever admonishes (his friend) for every sin his admonishment lasts.

173. If the ill- natured (person) knows that he tortures himself, he will be tolerant in his manners.

174. When the person is tongue- tied, the idea refrains from him, and the ways puzzle him surely fellowship is his key.

175. Three (groups) get nothing but good: Those who keep silent, those who give up evil, those who remember Allah, the Great and Almighty, very much, and the head of determination is humbleness.

176. Try your brother during a blessing happens to you or a misfortune afflict you.

177. He whose anger appears his deception appears, and he whose desire becomes strong his determination becomes weak.

178. Whoever does not advance the examination before trust, and trust before fellowship, his fellowship produces regret.

179. Man's look is a part of his inner- self.

180. Whoever is opinionated is liable to the dangers of slips.

181. Whoever does not ask Allah (to give him) of his favor becomes poor.

182. Verily, supplication is more penetrative than the spear head.

183. Some men visited him (al- Sadiq), suddenly one man of them mentioned a man, backbited him (the man) and complained of him, so Abu Abd Allah said to him: How is all your brother for you, which of men is well- bred?

184. The relation among brothers during presence is to visit each other, and during travel is to write to each other.

185. The hearts are disposed by nature for loving him who avails them and hating him who harms them.

186. The debt is worry during night and abasement during day.

187. Obey your parents and your children obey you, and be chaste for the women of men and your women are chaste.

188. The person is many with his brother, and there is no good in the friendship of him who does not wish you what you wish for him.

189. Two men disputed at his presence, so he, peace be on him, said to them: Truly, whoever is victorious with oppression does not get good, and whoever does evil for people, then must not deny evil when it is done for him.

190. No living is more comfortable than good behavior, no property is more useful than the satisfaction with the small profitable (thing), and no ignorance is more harmful than vanity.

191. Shake hands with each other because it removes the spite.

192. Fear Allah some fear even it is little, and leave a screen between you and Allah even if it is thin.

193. Much thinking about the wise saying fertilizes intellect.

194. He was asked about the quality of justice of the man, so he, peace on him, said: If he prevents his eyes from the forbidden, his tongue from sins, and his hand from the wrong.

195. Whoever does not acknowledge some one's favor then he is self-conceited.

196. Two qualities do not come together in a hypocrite a good way and understanding a norm.

197. No one, even if the conditions help him, abstracts luxury living but through a misfortune, and whoever anticipates to postpone the misfortune through hastening towards the chances, the days deprives him of his chance, because the state of the days is deprivation and the way of days is passing.

198. How many a deceived (person) in what Allah has bestowed upon him, how many a tempted (person) in Allah's concealment for him, and a how many charmed (person) by the praise of men for him.

199. Good health is a hidden blessing: if it is found it is forgotten, and if it is missed it is remembered.

200. Good health is a blessing for which thankfulness is feeble.

201. Badness is in three (things): in the woman, the riding animal, and the house, as for the badness in the woman is her high dowry and her disobedience for her husband, as for the riding animal is its bad behavior and preventing its back, and as for the house is narrowness of its yard and the evil of its neighbors and the large number of its defects.

202. It was said to him: Which traits of the person are the best? So he, peace on him, said: Solemnity without awe, generosity without seeking a reward, and busyness in other than the belongings of this world.

203. Whoever has no five (qualities) has not many enjoyable (things), It was said (to him): Son of the Prophet of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, what are they? So he, peace be on him, said: religion, intellect, modesty, good behavior, good manners And whoever has not five (qualities) is not happy at living: good health, security, riches, satisfaction, and an agreeable friend.

204. How much patience of an hour causes long happiness, and how much pleasure causes long sadness.

205. It is not (an act) of fairness to ask the brothers (to make) fairness.

206. The angry (person) has no idea, the bored (person) has no friend, the envier has no riches, whoever does not think about consequences is not determined, and thinking about consequences is the fertilization of hearts.

207. Cleave to generosity and good behavior, because they adorn the person as the middle jewel adorns the necklace.

208. Three (things) are of happiness: the agreeable wife, the obedient child, and (when) the person is given sustenance for which he goes early in the morning and comes back to his family.

209. Sleeping is rest for the body, speech is rest for the soul, and silence is rest for intellect.

210. Do not call the man a friend; call him acquaintance till you try him with three (things): make him angry, then wait (to know whether) his anger takes him out of the right to the falsehood (or not), during the Dinar and the Durham, and when you travel with him.

211. How many a blessing Allah bestows upon His servant without his act, how many a hoping (person) for a hope and the choice is in other than it, and how many a walker for his death and he is slow from his luck.

212. (It is an act) of injustice that the rider says to the walker: the road.

213. If the man loves his religion, his brothers love him.

214. The honor of a believer is his prayers at night, and his dignity is to refrain from harming people.

215. Approach Allah through helping your brothers.

216. I ensure him who economizes that he will not be poor.

217. Be patient for the enemies of blessings, because you do not reward him who disobeys Allah through you better than you obey Allah through him.

218. Whoever is satisfied with death, death will put an end to him and through it he will be rewarded, and whoever is dissatisfied with death, death will put an end to him and Allah will frustrate his action.

219. Give presents to each other (to) love each other, because the present removes the spites.

220. Allah is not worshipped with better than silence and going to His House.

221. I prevent you from (having) two qualities through which the men get mined: that you borrow a loan from Allah with falsehood and give a legal opinion without knowledge.

222. (Some) of the reality of faith is that you (should) prefer the truth even if it harms you to falsehood even if it avails you, and your words should not exceed your action.

223. The greedy (person) is deprived of two qualities and two qualities are always present with him: He is deprived of satisfaction so he misses rest, and he is deprived of pleasure so he misses certainty.

224. Safety is with conviction, and regret is with hastiness.

225. Whoever begins an action not in its time fulfills it not in its time.

226. Men are three (kinds): a man is with his property, a man is with his high rank, and a man is with his tongue and is the best of the three (men).

227. Begging is not permitted but in three (states): unpayable blood money or a heavy debt or an extreme need.

228. Indeed, the worthiest of men to wish men riches are the misers, because if men become rich they will refrain from their properties, the worthiest of men to wish men righteousness are the people of defects, because if men become righteous they will refrain from looking for their defects, and the worthiest of men to wish men clemency are the people of foolishness, who need (men) to forgive their foolishness, so the people of miserliness have wished men poverty, the people of defects have wished men defects, and the people of foolishness have wished men foolishness, because poverty (makes man) in need of the miser, corruption (makes man) look for the people of defected, and foolishness is a reward for sins.

229. Whoever shows enmity toward three (persons) becomes humble: the parents, the supreme ruler, and the creditor.

230. The demands of men in this world are four (things): riches, gentleness, littleness of concern, and glory. As for riches, it is found in satisfaction. So, whoever seeks it in the muchness of property does not find it. As for the littleness of concern, it is found in the littleness (with the muchness of work) does not find it (concern). And as for glory, it is found in the service of the Creator. So, whoever seeks it in the service of the creature does not find it.

231. I have found the knowledge of all men in four (things): the first of them is that you should know your Lord, the second is that you should know what He has made with you, the third is that you should know what He has wanted from you, and the fourth is that you should know what takes you out of your religion.

232. If four (things) spread, four (things) appear: If adultery spreads, earth quakes appear. If Zakat (alms) is forbidden, cattle are perished. If the judge is unjust in judgment, rain does not come down from the sky. And if the non- Muslims guard, the polytheists over- come the Muslims.

233. Verily, patience, piety, clemency, and good behavior are among the manners of prophets.

234. Four (things) are in vain: eating after fullness, the lamp in the moon, the plant in the salty land, and the favor for the inappropriate person.

235. Four (things) come to nothing: the affection you grant for him who has no faithfulness, favor for him who has no gratefulness, knowledge for him who has no listening for it, and a secret you entrust to him who has no keeping for it.

236. Five (things) are impossible (to result from) five (things): advice from the envier is impossible, pity from the enemy is impossible, sacredness from the sinner is impossible, loyalty from the woman is impossible, and dignity from poverty is impossible.

237. Five (things) are as I (the author) say: the miser has no rest, the envier has no pleasure, the bored (person) has no faithfulness, the liar has no manhood, and the foolish (person) does not become master.

238. Five (persons) do not sleep: he who plans to shed blood, the owner of many properties, he who says falsity and slander against people to obtain a transient thing of the world, he who is fascinated by many properties (while) he has no property, and he who loves a dear (person) and expects his parting.

239. Whoever has no admonisher from him, and a deterrent from his own self, and he has no guide to fellow enables his enemy to his neck.

240. No person perishes because of consultation.

241. Making a compliment to people is one third of intellect.

242. (It is an act) of modesty to greet him whom you meet.

243. Reminding someone of a favor demolishes the favor.

244. The favor is that which is by one's own initiative, as for what you give after asking you match it with what he gives from his face.

245. The best alms is to cool a very thirsty liver.

246. He whose two days are equal then he is deceived, and he whose day on which he lives is better than his yesterday which departed from him then he is happy.

247. The believer complies (with someone's moods) and does not dispute.

248. Whoever does not look for his own defect his defect lasts, and he whose defect lasts then death is good for him.

249. Whoever commits a sin without intention is worthy of forgiveness.

250. To fear (Allah) is the inheritance of science and science is the rays of knowledge and heart of faith, and whoever is deprived of fear does not become a scientist even he splits perception in the ambiguous (matters) of science.

251. He who answers all that he is asked, surely is mad.

252. Whoever abuses men, his manhood is in vain.

253. Do not look for (the defects of) men so as not to become without a friend.

254. Whoever does not accept (anything) from his friend but to prefer him to himself, his wrath lasts.

255. Enough for the fear of Allah is knowledge and enough for self-conceit is ignorance.

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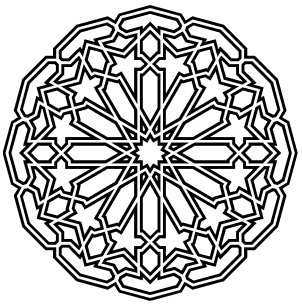

CHAPTER SEVEN

Imam al-Kazim

Imam al-Kazim (a.s.)

(745 AD – 799 AD)

Imam Mūsá ibn Ja‘far al-Kāżim was born on 7th of Safar, 128 AH (745 AD) at a place called Abwa, situated between Mecca and Medina. His father was the sixth Imam, Ja‘far al-Sadiq and his mother was Hamida who was the daughter of a noble man named Saed, hailing from the country of Berber (present Algeria). Imam Mūsá al-Kāżim was born during the power struggles between the Umayyad and the Abbasid.

Imam Musa al-Kazim passed twenty years of his sacred life under the gracious patronage of his father. His inherent genius and gifted virtues combined with the enlightened guidance and education from the Imam ja`far al-Sadiq (a.s.), showed in the manifestation of his future personality. He was fully versed with the Divine Knowledge even in his childhood.

When Imam Jafar-as-Sadiq (a.s.) was martyred by the Abbasid caliph by poisoning on 15 Rajab, 148 AH, Imam Musa-e-Kazim (a.s.) succeeded the Holy Office of Imamat as the seventh Imam. The period of his Imamat continued for 35 years. In the first decade of his Imamat,

Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) could afford a peaceful execution of the responsibilities of his sacred office and carried on the propagation of the teachings of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

But soon after, he fell a victim to the ruling kings and a greater part of his life passed in prison. Imam al-Kazim (a.s.) remained in prison in both Basrah and Baghdad for many years of his life. Like his father, he was assassinated by the Abbasids. In 183 AH (799 AD), Imam al-Kazim was killed with poisoned dates by the Abbasid authority. He was then fifty-five years of age.

Time and circumstances did not permit the Imam al-Kazim (a.s.) to establish institutions to impart religious knowledge to his followers as his father, Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) and his grandfather, Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) had done. He was never allowed to address a congregation. He carried on his mission of preaching and guiding people quietly. He also became the author of a few books of which the most famous is "Musnad of Imam Moosa-e-Kazim (a.s.)".

In what follows, some selected commandments and wise maxims are given of the Imam al-Kazim’s teaching with regard to the area of moral conducts and ethical values.

Imam Musa al-Kazim's Commandments to Husham

Allah the Elevated portends good to the people of reason and understanding in his Book. He says: Give the glad news to those of Our servants who listen to the words and only follow the best ones. Tell them that they are those whom Allah has guided. They are the people of understanding. Holy Qur'an (39:17-18).

O Husham-bin-Al-Hakam, Allah the Majestic has certainly submitted his arguments to people perfectly through minds, explained everything completely to them, and led people to His godhead through the guides. He says: Your Lord is the only Lord. There is no god but He, the Beneficent and Merciful. The creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of nights and days, the ships that sail in the sea for the benefit of the people, the water that Allah sends from the sky to revive the dead earth where He has scattered all kinds of animals, the winds of all directions, and the clouds rendered for service between the sky and the earth are all evidence (of His existence) for those who use their reason. Holy Qur'an (16:163-4).

O Husham, Allah the Majestic provides the people's having a manager as the evidence on the acknowledgment of Him. He says: Allah has made the day and the night, the sun and the moon, and all the stars subservient to you by His command. In this there is evidence of the truth for people of understanding. Holy Qur'an (16:12).

Ha Mim. I swear by the illustrious Book. We have made it an Arabic reading test so that perhaps you may understand. Holy Qur'an (43:1-3).

Of the evidence of His existence are His showing you lightening which gives you fear and hope and his sending water down from the sky, which revives the earth after its death. In this there is evidence (of the truth) for the people of understanding. Holy Qur'an (30:24)

O Husham, Allah then preaches to the people of reason and makes them desirous to the world to come. He says: The worldly life is but useless amusement and sport (compared to) the life hereafter, which is far better and is only for the pious. Will you not then understand? Holy Qur'an (6:32)

Whatever you (people) have been given are only the means for enjoyment and beauty of the worldly life, but the means of enjoyment (which you will receive from Allah) in the life to come will be better and everlasting. Will you then not take heed? Holy Qur'an (28:60)

O Husham, Allah then warns the unintelligent against His chastisement. He the Majestic says: Then we totally destroyed the others. You pass by (their ruined town) in the morning and at night. Will you then not understand? Holy Qur'an (37:136-138)

O Husham, Allah then expounds that mind is always favoring knowledge. He says: These are parables, which We tell to human being, but only the learned ones understand them. Holy Qur'an (29:43)

O Husham, Allah then dispraises those who are incapable of understanding. He says: When some people are asked to follow the revelations of Allah, they say, "We would rather follow what our fathers have followed," even though their fathers had no understanding and could not find the true guidance. Holy Qur'an (2:170)

The wickedest beasts in the sight of Allah are the deaf and the dumb who have no understanding. Holy Qur'an (8:22)

If you ask them, "Who has created the heavens and the earth," they will certainly say, "Allah has created them." Say, "It is only Allah who deserves all praise, but most of them do not know. Holy Qur'an (31:25)

Allah then dispraises the majority. He says: Most of the people in the land will lead you away from Allah's guidance if you follow them. Holy Qur'an (6:116)

But many of them are ignorant. Hence, most of them have no feeling.

O Husham, Allah then praises minority. He says: Very few of My servants are grateful. (34:13) Except for the righteously striving believers who are very few. (38:24) and "No one believed in him, except a few." (11:40)

O Husham, Allah then mentions the people of the reasonable understanding in the best way of praise and describes them in the best wording. He says: Allah gives wisdom to anyone whom He wants. Whoever is given wisdom, certainly, has received much good. Only people of reason can grasp this. Holy Qur'an (2:269)

Allah also says: This is a reminder for everyone who has a heart. Holy Qur'an (50:37) "Heart" in the previous Verse stands for the capability of understanding. Allah also says: We gave wisdom to Luqman Holy Qur'an (31:12) 'Wisdom' stands for understandability and intelligence.

O Husham, Luqman said to his son: "Show modesty before the right and you will be the most reasonable. O son, this world is a deep ocean, faith the cargo, depending upon Allah its sail, reason its captain, knowledge its guide, and patience the anchor."

O Husham, everything has its evidence. The evidence of being intelligent is pondering (over things) and the evidence on pondering is silence. Likewise, everything has its pack animal, and

modesty is the pack animal of the intelligent. It is sufficient ignorant to ride on that which you are told not to ride.

O Husham, if people tell that you have a pearl in your hand while you are sure it is a nut, not pearl, this should not advantage you. If people tell that you have a nut in the hand while you are sure it is a pearl, not nut, this also should not harm you.

O Husham, the main reason beyond Allah's sending prophets and messengers is that people will understand the commandments of Allah and His messengers. The best responsive people will be the most understanding, the most knowledgeable of Allah's commandments will be the most intelligent, and the most intelligent then will be the most high-ranking in this world and the world to come.

O Husham, for every servant (of Allah), there is an angel invested with full power over him. Whenever that servant shows modesty for the sake of Allah, the angel will elevate him, and whenever he shows arrogance, the angel will humiliate him.

O Husham, Allah has two arguments against people: one is explicit and the other is implicit. The explicit arguments of Allah are the messengers, prophets, and imams. The implicit arguments are the minds.

O Husham, the true intelligent is he whose legal-gotten provisions do not divert him from thanking Allah and whose illegal-gotten provision do not overcome his steadfastness.

O Husham, as for those who extinguish the illumination of thinking with the long expectations, erase the novels of wisdom with the curious wording, and extinguish the lights of learning with the personal whims, they will back their whims to ruin their brains. Those who ruin their minds will surely devastate their worldly and religious affairs.

O Husham, how come do you expect that Allah will accept your deeds while you are involving your mind with matters that are

away from Allah's commandments and you are complying with your whims and letting them overcome your mind?

O Husham, steadfastness against seclusions is a proof on willpower. He who understands the commandments of Allah, the Blessed the Exalted, will surely withdraw from the people of the worldly pleasures. He will also be desirous for that which Allah has promised and will regard Allah as the sociable in seclusion, the companion in loneliness, the fortune in poverty, and the supporter instead of the clan.

O Husham, the creatures have been formed for obeying Allah. No safety is obtained without obedience. The course of obedience is knowledgeability and the course of knowledgeability is learning. Learning is possible through mind. There should be a godly scholar who is the source of knowledge. Such scholars can be recognized through the mind.

O Husham, the few deeds of the intelligent will be accepted and doubled, while the many deeds of the followers of passions and the ignorant will be rejected.

O Husham, the true intelligent is that who agrees to have minimum worldly needs with wisdom. He does not agree to have little wisdom with all of the worldly pleasures. Therefore, his trade has been profitable.

O Husham, if you think it is fortunate for you to have only what suffices you then you will be sufficed with the least needs of this world. If you think it is not sufficient for you to have the minimum needs of this world then all the worldly pleasures will not suffice you.

O Husham, the intelligent have left the pleasures of this world. How is it then for the sins? The abstinence from the worldly surplus pleasures is recommendable while the desistance from committing sins is obligatory.

O Husham, the intelligent have abstained from the worldly pleasures and desired for the world to come because they have

known that world, as well as the world to come, is demanding and demanded. The world will surely trace the seeker of the world to come to give him his provisions perfectly. The world to come will trace the seeker of the worldly pleasures when death overcomes him to deprive him of the pleasures of this world and the world to come.

O Husham, as for those who desire for being rich without fortune, having peace of mind against envy, and enjoying safety of the religion, they are advised to beseech to Allah imploringly for granting them perfect intelligence, for the intelligent will surely satisfy themselves with only what is sufficient for them. Consequently, he who satisfies himself with only what is sufficient for him will be surely rich. Those who do not satisfy themselves with what is sufficient for them will never obtain richness.

O Husham, as describing the manners of virtuous people, Allah the Majestic mentions that they are used to saying: Lord, do not cause our hearts to deviate from Your guidance, and grant us mercy. You are the Most Awarding One. Holy Qur'an (3:8) This is because they realized that hearts might be deviated or might regain their blindness and ruination. He who does not understand Allah's Commandments will not fear Him. Similarly, he who does not understand Allah's commandments will not have a mind that in founded on constant knowledge that he considers and finds its factuality. Except those whose words and implicit beliefs agree with their deeds and appearances, no one can enjoy the previous characters. Allah has referred to the implicit affairs of the mind only through indicative appearances.

O Husham, Amirul Muminin [Ali (a.s.)] used to say: "The most favorable way of worshipping Allah is making use of mind". Mind is not perfect for a man unless he enjoys many qualities: he should save people from his atheism and evil and make them expect his reason and good. His wealth should be offered and he should avoid useless wording. His food should be his share from the worldly pleasures. He should never stop seeking knowledge. He should prefer humility and modesty with Allah to credit and honor with others. He should regard any favor that he does as little and see all people better than him and he is the most vicious among them.

The enjoyment of such qualities is surely the perfection of intelligence and the perfection of personality.

O Husham, the deeds of the truthful will be purified, the provisions of the well-meaning will be increased, and the age of those who treat their friends and folks charitably will be elongated.

O Husham, do not speak wording of wisdom before the ignorant so that you will not wrong it. Do not prevent the wise from receiving the wisdom lest you will wrong them.

O Husham, as they left wisdom for you, you should leave the worldly pleasures for them.

O Husham, those who lack personality are surely lacking the religion and those who are unintelligent are surely lacking personality. The most high-ranking people are those who disregard the worldly pleasures completely. Paradise is the only price of your bodies; do not sell them with anything other than Paradise.

O Husham, Amirul Muminin [Ali (a.s.)] used to say: "No one should sit in the forefront of a session except those who can answer when they are questioned, speak when others cannot, and own the most successful opinion. He who does not enjoy these three characters and allow himself to sit in the forefront of a session is surely idiot. [Imam] Hasan ibn Ali (a.s.) used to say: "You should seek needs only from their proper people." 'O son of the Messenger of Allah,' some asked him, 'Who are the proper people on needs?' He answered: They are those whom Allah mentions in His Book and says about them: Only the people of reason take heed. Holy Qur'an(38:19) They are the owners of mind.

[Imam] Ali ibn-al-Husain (a.s.) used to say: "to sit with the virtuous will invite to virtue, to sit with the scholars will increase the mind, the obedience to the just rulers is the perfection of honor, the investment of the wealth is the perfection of personality, to guide the seeker of counsel is fulfillment of the rights of favors, and the desistance from harm is a sign of the perfection of mind. It will, sooner or later, achieve physical relaxation.

O Husham, the intelligent should not talk to the individuals that he anticipates they will belie him, ask from individuals that he anticipates they will not give, promise of things that he cannot do, hope for things that harm him, or take the initiative in doing what he anticipates he will not be able to accomplish.

Amirul Mu`minin (a.s.) used to say to his companions: I command you to fear Allah in secret and in public, be fair in both states of satisfaction and rage, earn provisions in richness and poverty, regard them who ruptured their relations with you, pardon them who oppressed you, and treat them who ignored you kindly. All your sights should be learning lessons, all your silence should be pondering over things, all your wordings should be mention of Allah, and all your nature should be generosity, for no stingy will be in Paradise and no generous will be in Hell.

O Husham, Allah will compassionate them who feel properly embarrassed from Him by keeping the head with what it contains (like the eye, the ear, and the tongue) and the abdomen with what is in it, retain death and misfortune, and realize that Paradise is surrounded by misfortunes and Hell is surrounded by the appetites.

O Husham, for those who abstain from engaging themselves in people's honors, Allah will protect them from slipping on the Day of Resurrection. For those who save people from (The results of) their rage, Allah will save them from His wrath on the Day of Resurrection.

O Husham, the intelligent should never tell lies even if it accords him whim.

O Husham, in the wisp of the Prophet's sword, there is written: The most insolent of people is that who beats other than the one who beat him and kill other than the one who killed him. He who votes for other than his true masters is disbelieving in what Allah has revealed to His Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). As for those who bring a heresiarch matter or shelter an originator of a heresy, Allah will not accept their remuneration or apology on the Day of Resurrection.

O Husham, after the acknowledgment of Allah, the best acts of the offertory to Allah are the prayers, piety to the parents, and evasion of envy, self-conceit, and pride.

O Husham, get ready for your coming days and prepare the answers for them. You will be inevitably judged and interrogated. Learn lessons from this world and its people. This life is surely long and short. You should act as if you can see the rewards of your acts in your hands, so that you will be urged acting so more importunately. Understand Allah's commandments and learn from the changeability of this world and its manners. The coming days of this world are certainly as same as those which passed away; therefore, you should take examples from these days.

[Imam]Ali ibn-al-Husain (a.s.) used to say: All things that are under the sunlight in the east and west, in oceans and lands, and plains and mountains; all these are just like a shadow for the true disciples of Allah and the people of the acknowledgment of Him. Is there no free man who will leave this valueless world to its people? Paradise is the only price of your bodies; hence, you should avoid selling them with any other price. He who satisfies themselves with the worldly pleasures is surely satisfying himself with the worthless.

O Husham, all people look at the stars, but no one can realize their ways and places except those who have full acquaintance with astronomy. In like fashion, you all study wisdom, but no one can benefit by it except those who apply it practically.

O Husham, the Jesus (a.s.) said to his disciples: O bad servants, the height of a palm tree terrifies you as you remember its thorns and the difficulty of climbing it, but you forget its good fruits and benefits. The same thing is said about the world.

As you remember the supplies of the acts of the world to come, you remember its long time and forget the bliss, illumination, and fruits that you will obtain there. O bad servants! To find the sweetest taste of wheat, you should first full its grains, clean and mill them properly.

The same thing is said about faith. To find the best taste of faith and to benefit by its results, you should first have it as sincere and perfect as possible. Truly I say to you: If you have found a torch the fuel of which is tar, in a gloomy night, you will surely seek its light disregarding its malodor. In a like manner, you should receive the wisdom from anybody with whom you find it, disregarding the scope of his desire for it. Truly I say to you, O slaves of this world! You will not attain the honor of the world to come unless you abstain from whatever you desire.

Never postpone repentance to tomorrow. Before tomorrow, there is a day and a night during which Allah's act is coming and going. Truly I say to you: Those who are not indebted are surely less grievous than the indebted even if they defray their debts properly. In the same way, those who avoid committing sins are more relaxing and less grievous than the committers of sins even if they purely repent and return to Allah. The insignificant sins are the traps of the Shaitan who persuades you to disregard such sins until they are amassed and surround you.

Truly I say to you: In wisdom, people are of two kinds; one is that who says the wisdom utterly and applies it to his deeds, and the other is that who says it utterly but wastes it through his evildoing. How difference between the two! Blessed are the scholars by deeds. Woe to the scholars by words.

O bad servants! betake the mosques of your Lord as prisons of your bodies and foreheads. Make your hearts the residences of God-fearing. Do not be certainly the fondest of the worldly pleasures, and the most tolerant is the most abstinent.

O bad slaves! Do not behave like the swift glede s, the sly foxes. the perfidious wolves, or the wild lions with their preys. Your conducts with people are in this form. You hurry to some, cheat others, and betray others. Truly I say to you. It is useless to have a sound physique while the interior is corrupted. Hence, your sound bodies should not admire you when your hearts are tainted. It is also useless to purify your skins when your hearts are dirty. Do not be like sieves that let the good flour pass and hold the bran.

Likewise, you should not speak of wisdom while treason is filling in your hearts.

O slaves of this world! Your like is the lamp when it gives light to others and burns itself. O sons of Israel! Compete with each other in attending the scholars' sessions even if you will have to kneel. Allah will surely enliven the dead hearts by the illumination of wisdom like the rainfall when it enlivens the derelict lands.

O Husham, the following is written in the Bible: Blessed be those who treat each other mercifully, for they will be treated mercifully on the Day of Resurrection. Blessed be the makers of peace between people, for they will be exclusively favored on the Day of Resurrection. Blessed be the pure-hearted, for they will be the pious on the Day of Resurrection. Blessed be the modest in this world, for they will be scaling the pulpits of majesty on the Day of Resurrection.

O Husham, fewness of wording is a great wisdom. You should keep silent, for it is a good charity, a little burden, and lightness of the sins. Fortify the door of self-possession because patience is the door of self-possession. Allah the majestic surely hates those who laugh motivelessly and those who walk aimlessly. The rulers should be acting like the shepherds whose eyes are not turned away from their herd. They also should not treat their subjects arrogantly. Be ashamed of Allah in secrets in the same way as you feel ashamed from people in public. You should know that the wording of wisdom is the believers' lost. Adhere to the knowledge before it is removed. The removal of knowledge is the absence of its people.

O Husham, learn whatever you ignore and teach the ignorant your knowledge. Respect the scholars for their knowledge and avoid disputing with them, and disrespect the ignorant for their ignorance and do not dismiss them. You should approximate and teach them.

O Husham, the favors that you do not thank Allah for are as same as the sins for which you will be punished.

Amirul Mu`minin (a.s.) said: There are the slaves of Allah whose hearts are broken due to fearing Him. Hence, they keep silent while

they are eloquent and intelligent. They compete with each other on offering the pure deeds to Allah. They do not content with their many deeds and do not accept for themselves the few deeds. They see themselves as vicious while they are good and virtuous.

O Husham, prudency is a part of faith and faith is a part of Paradise while obscenity is a part of aversion and aversion is in Hell.

O Husham, speakers are one of three: winning, safe, or perishing. The sinning speakers are those who mention Allah. The safe speakers are those who keep silent. The perishing speakers are those who are engaged in bad wording. Allah has certainly forbidden Paradise from including the impudent speakers of bad wording who do not care for what they say and what is said about them.

Abu-Dharr used to say: O seeker of knowledge, the tongue is the key to both good and evil. You should seal your mouth as you seal your gold and currencies.

O Husham, the worst servants (of Allah) are those who are two-faced and two-tongued. They are those who praise their friends when they meet them and backbite them when they are absent. They envy their friends who obtain graces and disappoint them when they are suffering a misfortune. Charity is the foremost in rewarding and oppression is the foremost in punishment. The most vicious servants of Allah are those whom you hate to sit with for their obscenity. Except the harvest of the tongues, nothing overturns people on their noses in Hell. To leave what does not concern you is a sign of the proper Islam.

O Husham, you will not be true believer unless you are fearful (of Allah's punishment) and hopeful (for Allah's reward). You will not be true fearful and true hopeful unless you avoid what you fear and work for what you hope.

O Husham, Allah the Majestic says: I swear by My majesty, glory, might, potency, magnificence, and elevation, for the servants who prefer My biddings to their biddings, I will install opulence in their minds, make the world to come their concern, take the charge of

saving their livelihood, make their provisions in the heavens and the earth, and guarantee their shares of profits in every transaction.

O Husham, anger is the key to every evil. The most perfect faithful believers are the most well-mannered. If possible, you should associate only with those whom you have done favors.

O Husham, cling to lenience, for lenience is felicity and clumsiness is evil portent. Lenience, charity, and well mannerism boom the lodgings and increase the provisions.

O Husham, Allah says: Can any thing else be a response to a favor but a favor? Holy Qur'an (55:60) This holy saying is applicable to the believers and the disbelievers and the charitable and the lecherous. He whom has been done a favor should reward for it. To do favor to that who did you favor is not a suitable reward, because he will have the merit of commencing with doing the favor before you.

O Husham, the like of this world is the snake - it is soft to the touch but bearing poison in the interior. The intelligent men fear the snake while the boys hurry to take it by the hands.

O Husham, be tolerant in the acts of obedience to Allah and be steadfast against the acts of disobedience to Him. This world is no more than an hour. You will not fine the pleasures of what has passed away and you will not be able to recognize what is coming. Be patient in that hour and you will attain bliss.

O Husham, the like of this world is the seawater - it leads the thirsty to more thirst until it kills him.

O Husham, beware of arrogance. He who feels arrogant, even if as small as a grain of mustard seed, in the heart will not see Paradise. Pride is Allah's dress and Allah will surely overturn those who try to take off His dress on the faces in Hell.

O Husham, he who does not settle and account with himself every day, so that he would seek more of the good deeds and seek

Allah's forgiveness and acceptance of repentance for the bad deeds, is not one of us.

O Husham, the world came to the Jesus (a.s.) in the form of a blue lady. He asked her, 'How many men did you marry?' 'Many,' answered the world. 'Did they all divorce you?' asked Jesus (a.s.). 'No,' she replied, ' I killed all of them.' Jesus(a.s.) said, 'Woe to the rest of your husbands. Why do they not learn lessons from the past ones?'

O Husham, the light of the body is in the eyes. If the sight is luminous, the whole body will be bright. The light of the spirit is in the brain. If the servant is intelligent, he will be having acknowledgment of his Lord. If he has acknowledgment of his Lord, he will see his religion obviously. If he ignores the affairs of his Lord, he will be having no religion. Like the body that does not live without a living soul, the religion does not live without the true intendment. The true intendment is proved through mind only.

O Husham, plants grow in plain, not rocky, lands. In the same way, wisdom will grow in the hearts of the modest, not the arrogant, because Allah has made modesty the instrument of the mind and made arrogance the instrument of ignorance. Do you not notice that he who raises the head to the ceiling will have his head broken? Likewise, he who hands down will enjoy the shades and the protection of the ceiling. Similarly, Allah will disgrace those who do not behave humbly to Him and will exalt those who humble themselves for Him.

O Husham, how ugly poverty after richness is! How ugly the commitment of sins after religiousness is! Moreover, to leave the adoration of Allah after worship is uglier than the previous.

O Husham, except for either a heedful listener or a speaker of knowledge, life is surely worthless.

O Husham, Allah has not distributed among the servant anything better than intelligence. The sleep of the intelligent is preferred to the staying up of the ignorant. Allah specified intelligence as a qualification of the prophets so that their minds will be preferred to

all of the efforts of the diligent ones together. A servant will not fulfill any of Allah's rights before he understands it.

O Husham, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said: You should approach the silent believer, because he will surely provide you with wisdom. The faithful believer should talk very little and act very much. The hypocrite talks very much and acts very little.

O Husham, Allah the Exalted revealed to David the Prophet (a.s.): ask My servants not to make between them and Me scholars that are seduced by the worldly pleasures. They will surely preclude the servants from mentioning Me and block the way to the adoration and supplication to Me. Such scholars are the bandits of My servants. The least thing that I will do to them is that I will take the charm of the adoration and supplication to Me from their hearts.

O Husham, the angels of the heavens and the angels of the earth will curse those who feel self-conceit. He who treats his friends arrogantly and haughtily is certainly opposing Allah. He who claims falsely is dragging himself away from his good.

O Husham, Allah the Exalted revealed to prophet David (a.s.): O David, warn and advise your companions against the fondness of passions. The hearts of those who are fond of passions are certainly screened from Me.

O Husham, beware of showing pride against my disciples and using your knowledge against them lest, Allah will hate you and, then, neither your world nor will your world to come stead you. Regard this worlds as a temporary lodging that you are waiting for leaving it.

O Husham, to sit to the religious is the honor of this world and the world to come and to counsel with the intelligent and the well-wishers is good omen, blessing, rationality, and success from Allah. Beware of opposing the advice of the intelligent and the well-wishers so as to avoid perdition.

O Husham, beware of associating with everybody except the intelligent and the trustful. You should be friendly with these two

persons only. You should escape the others like escaping from beasts. The intelligent should be too ashamed from Allah to associate others in the intent of his deed, because Allah is the only endower of the graces. If you encounter two matters that you ignore which of them is the most correct and acceptable, you should leave the matter that is more favorable to the whim. The very much rightness lies in opposing the whims. Beware of challenging the wisdom and giving it to the people of ignorance.

Husham said: I asked the Imam (a.s.), 'What should I do if I find somebody seeking wisdom but his mind is too narrow to receive it?' He (a.s.) answered: You should, in this case, deliver wisdom to him so kindly. If his hearts is too narrow to receive it, you should avoid seditious matters. You should also avoid the answers of the arrogant. Knowledge will be disgraced if it is given to the unconscious.

Husham said; What should I do if I cannot fine a person who asks about wisdom properly?' I asked.

The Imam (a.s.) answered: You should take the opportunity of the ignorance of wisdom so as to be saved from the seditious wording and the great sedition of the answer. You should also realize that Allah did dot elevate the modest people according to the measure of their modesty, but He elevate them according to their fear, but He secured them out of His compassion and mercy. What do you think about the Compassionate the Merciful Who curries favor with those who harm His disciple? How will He then behave to those whom are hurt due to their adherence to him? What do you think about the Oft-Returning the Merciful Who accepts the repentance of his enemies? How will He then behave to those who accept Him and suffer people's enmity for His sake?

O Husham, the fear of the world to come will vanish from the hearts of those who favor the worldly pleasures. He who favors the worldly affairs whenever he receives more knowledge will be remoter and remoter from Allah and Allah will consequently intensify His wrath on him.

O Husham, the true intelligent is that who avoids what he cannot do. Most of success lies in opposing the passion. For those who depend upon hopes, their deeds will be worse.

O Husham, if you consider the march of the death, you will be diverted from hopes.

O Husham, beware of greed. Never expect having what is in people's hands. Deaden your expectation from the creatures. Certainly, greed is the key to humiliation. It reduces the mind, kills the acts of personality, soils the honors, and cancels knowledgeability. Abide by adherence and depending upon Allah. Strive your whims so as to present your essence from ruination. This is as obligatory as striving the enemies.

Husham said: I asked the Imam (a.s.) about the kind of enemies whom should be striven before others. He answered: You should begin with the nearest to you, the most inimical, the most harmful, the most aggressive, and the most hidden despite his closeness to you. It is Iblis who is instigating your enemies against you and the source of the hearts' ill inspirations. You should regard him as the most antagonistic enemy and you should be more tolerant in striving him than he is as he is trying to lead you to perdition. He is surely less supported than you are and less harmful despite his great evil, provided that you cling to Allah so as to be guided to a straight path.

O Husham, Allah is surely doing great favors to those whom He endows with a mind that controls their whims, knowledge that controls their ignorance, and opulence that controls their poverty.

O Husham, beware of this world and its people. People are four classes: one is falling behind as he is embracing his whims, one is self-conceited due to his knowledge and the more he learns, the more arrogant he becomes. He towers up conceitedly before the less knowledgeable due to his being more learned. One (of the four classes) is ignorant worshipper who behaves disgracefully with the less dutiful and desires for being respected and reverenced. The fourth in heedful, knowledgeable, and knowing, but he cannot drag people to the straight path because he is either powerless or

beaten. He is also grievous because he cannot practice his knowledge. This one is the most ideal and the most intelligent of people.

O Husham, discern the mind and its soldiers and the ignorance and its soldiers and you will be guided.

Husham said: I said, 'May Allah make me your sacrifice. We will not know unless you instruct us.

Hence, the Imam (a.s.) answered: O Husham, the first thing of the mystical creatures that Allah created was the mind. He was on the right side of the Divine Throne. As Allah asked him to go, he went. As He asked him to come, he came. Hence, Allah the Majestic said: I created you as great and preferred you to all of My creatures.

Then Allah created ignorance from the gloomy salty ocean and asked it to go, and it went. But when Allah asked it to come, it refused. Hence, Allah cursed it because it had behaved arrogantly. Allah then arranged seventy-five soldiers for the mind. The ignorance, seeing what Allah had given honorably to the mind, felt malicious and said:

O Allah, this is a creature as same as I, but you honored and supported him while I, its opposite, am powerless. Support me with soldiers like him.

Allah the Exalted answered: Yes, I will, but if you disobey Me, I will take your soldiers and you out of My mercy. As the ignorance agreed to the condition. Allah gave it seventy-five soldiers. Within the seventy-five soldiers of the mind was goodness, which is the supporter of the mind. In the other side, Allah made evil as the supporter of the ignorance.

The soldiers of the mind and the ignorance are faith and disbelieving, belief and unbelief, sincerity and hypocrisy, hope and despair, justice and prejudice, satisfaction and displeasure, thanks and ingratitude, moderation and greed, trust and acquisitiveness, compassion and rudeness, knowledge and ignorance, chastity and profligacy, abstinence and desirousness, lenience and clumsiness,

self-respect and taunt, modesty and arrogance, deliberation and rashness, composure and imprudence, silence and chatter, submission and challenge, compliance and defiance, pardon and malice, mercy and coarseness, conviction and suspect, forbearance and bigotry, overlooking and revenge, opulence and neediness, pondering and inadvertence, consciousness and oblivion, relation and alienation, contentment and avidity, giving and deprivation, amicability and enmity, loyalty and betrayal, obedience and disobedience, succumbing and daring, affluence and scarcity, understanding and idiocy, recognition and denial, humoring and nastiness, purity and cheating, concealment and divulging, piety and irreverence, factuality and falseness, favor and bad turn, circumspection and publicizing, fairness and injury, God-fearing and envy, cleanness and dirtiness, prudency and insolence, temperance and excess, rest and fatigue, ease and difficulty, good health and ailment, sufficiency and over indulgence, wisdom and capriciousness, sense of worth and levity, pleasure and grief, repentance and insistence, attention and negligence, supplication and disdain, activity and laziness, delight and discontent, harmony and disagreement, and courtesy and foolishness.

O Husham, these good attributed cannot come together in a personality other than the personalities of the prophets, their successors, or faithful believers who passed Allah's exam of faith. The other believers should have some of the soldiers of the mind so that they will have a perfect intelligence and get rid of the soldiers of ignorance. Only then they may catch the highest rank of the prophets and their successors. Allah may lead you and us to His obedience.

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Imam Musa al-Kazim's (a.s.) Words of Wisdom

1 - The nafilas are the offertories of every believer to Allah.

2 - Hajj is the jihad of every weak.

3 - Everything has its tax and the tax of the body is the recommendable fasting.

4 - After the acknowledgment of Allah, the best worship is expecting the Relief.

5 - He who supplicates to Allah before he praises Him and blesses the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is as same as throwing an arrow without the existence of a string.

6 - He who is certain of the reward will give generously.

7 - The moderate will never be needy.

8 - Moderation is the half of the livelihood.

9 - Amicability is half of the intelligence.

10 -Very much care drives into senility.

11 - Hastiness is the true clumsiness.

12 - Fewness of the dependants is one of the two facilities.

13 - To depress the parents is impiety to them.

14 - As for those who beat the hand on the thigh or strike the hands together in misfortunes, their rewards will be cancelled.

15 - No one will gain the reward of suffering a misfortune unless he who forbears it and says: We are Allah's, and to Him we will return.

16 -Favors are worthless unless they are done to the highborn or the religious.

17 -Allah aids in as much as the need and endows with steadfastness in as much as the misfortune.

18 - The graces will persist for the moderate and the satisfied. The graces will be removed from the immoderate and the exaggerative.

19 -The fulfillment of the trusts and honesty bring earnings, while treachery and fabrication cause poverty and hypocrisy.

20 - When Allah wills to punish a worm, He gives it two wings so that it will fly and a bird will kill it.

21 - The believers' favors are worthless unless they are disregarded, veiled, and provided as soon as possible. He who disregards his favors is surely revering his friend to whom he has done the favor, he who considers his favors is surely disgracing his friend to whom he has done the favor, he who covers up the favors that he does is surely honoring his deeds, and he who fulfills his promises as soon as possible is surely giving pleasant gifts.

22 - Anyone who acknowledges Allah should not complain when his earnings are delayed and should not suspect the acts of Allah.

23 - As a man asked him about conviction, Imam Al-Kazim (a.s.) answered: the conviction is to depend upon Allah, submit to Him, consent to His acts, and entrust Him with the affairs.

24 - Abdullah-bin-Yahya said: Within the supplication that I wrote to Imam Al-Kazim (a.s.), there was the sentence, 'Praise be to Allah as much as the utmost of His knowledge.' The Imam answered my missive saying: Do not say, 'the utmost of his knowledge,' because His knowledge has no limits. You may say, 'the utmost of His satisfaction.'

25 - As a man asked him about the munificent, Imam Al-Kazim (a.s.) answered: Your question has two references. If you refer to the created munificent, I can tell you that he is the one who fulfills what Allah has imposed upon him, while the miserly is the one who withholds what Allah has imposed upon him. If you refer to the All-munificent Allah, I can tell you that He is the All-munificent whether He gives or not. If He gives, he gives you what is not yours, and if He does not give, He deprives you of what in not yours.

26 - Imam Al-Kazim (a.s.) said to one of his adherents: Fear Allah and say the truth even if it will cause you to perish, for your salvation lies in telling the truth. Fear Allah and leave the wrong even if it will save you, for your perdition lies in telling the wrong.

27 - As his agent swore he had not betrayed him, Imam Al-Kazim (a.s.) said to him: To betray me and waste my wealth are the same. However, betrayal is more harmful for you.

28 - Beware of depriving anyone in fields of obedience to Allah lest, you will lose two folds in fields of disobedience to Allah.

29 - The believer is like the two pans of a balance-the more faith he enjoys the more misfortunes he faces.

30 - Imam Al-Kazim (a.s.) said as he stopped near a grave: It is quite proper to leave the first of a matter the end of which is this (grave). It is also quite proper to fear the end of a thing the first of which is this (grave).

31 - He who speaks in the Essence of Allah will perish, he who seeks power will perish, and he who feels self-conceited will perish.

32 - The supplies of this world and the religion are difficult. Whenever you extend your hand towards any source of the worldly supplies, you will found out that a sinful has preceded you there. When you intend to obtain a source of the religious supplies, you will not find anyone helping you.

33 -Four deeds are originated from extreme solicitude. They are eating soil, crumbling the clay, clipping the nails with the teeth, and biting the hair of the beard. Looking at three things improves the sight. They are verdure, flowing water, and handsome faces.

34 -Good neighborhood is not the abstinence from harm. It is to tolerate the harm (of the neighbors).

35 - Do not take liberties with your friend. You should keep any quantity of respect among you lest you will lose prudency.

36 - Imam Al-Kazim (a.s.) said to one of his sons:

O son, let not Allah see you committing an act of disobedience against which he warned you, and let Him not miss you in an act of obedience to him of which He ordered you. Keep serious and do not

convince yourself that you are worshipping and obeying Allah perfectly, because no one can achieve perfection in the fields of worshipping Allah. Beware of joking because it extinguished the illumination of your faith and disgraces your personality. Beware of indolence and laziness because they both prevent you from receiving your shares of the pleasures of this world and the world to come.

37 -When injustice predominates over the right, it is unacceptable to expect good from anybody before investigation.

38 -Kissing on the mouth is not acceptable except for the wife and the little child.

39 - Try to divide your time into four parts. The first part should be dedicated to (secret) supplication to Allah, the second to seeking earnings, the third to associating with the friends and the trusty people who show you your defects and treat you sincerely, and the fourth to your legal pleasures. Through this part, you can manage the other three parts. Do not think of poverty and long age. He who thinks of poverty will be stingy and he who thinks of long age will be acquisitive. Offer a share of the worldly pleasures to yourselves by enjoying moderately the legal pleasures that do not injure your personalities. Make such pleasures help you fulfill your religious duties perfectly. It is said that, "As for those who neglect the legal worldly pleasures completely and adhere to the religious duties or neglect the religious duties and adhere to the worldly affairs, they are not from us.

40 -Learn the religious question, for jurisprudence is the key of intelligence, the perfection of worship, and the means to the high standings and the respectful positions in this world and the world to come. The priority of the knowledgeable over the worshipper is as same as the priority of the sun over the stars. Allah will not accept the deeds of those who avoid learning the religious questions.

41 - Imam Al-Kazim (a.s.) said to Ali-bin-Yaqtin: The expiation of working with the (unjust) rulers is to treat the friends with kindness.

42 - Whenever people perpetrate unprecedented sins, Allah will inflict upon them unexpected misfortunes.

43 - In the time of the just ruler, you should thank and he will gain rewards, In the time of the unjust ruler, you should tolerate and he will burden the punishment of the sin.

44 - Abu-Hanifa related: After I had performed the hajj I went to Medina to visit Abu-Abdillah As-Sadiq (a.s.). I entered his house and sat in the entrance waiting for his permission. After a while, a male toddler went out.

"O boy," I asked, "where should the stranger excrete in your country?" The boy asked for a respite before he sat to a wall and spoke: You should be away from riversides, places were fruits fall, yards of mosques, and roadbeds.

You should also hide against a wall, lift up your dress, avoid turning the face or the back to the Qiblah and then you can excrete any where. I was highly admired by the wording of that boy. I therefore asked about his name.

"I am, Musa-bin-Ja'far-bin-Mohammed-bin-Ali-bin-Al-Hussein-bin-Ali-bin-Abi Talib", answered he. I then asked him about the source of the acts of disobedience to Allah, He answered: the source of any sin is unquestionably one of three: either the Allah, the Allah and the servant, or the servant. If Allah is the source of sins - yet. He is not-, then it is improper for Him to punish the servants for what they did not commit.

If Allah and the servants are together the source of sin-yet this is not accurate-, then it is improper for the stronger partner to wrong the weak partner. If the servant is the source of the sins-and this is quite accurate-, then the Lord may pardon out of His generosity and liberty of punish for the commitment of such a sin. After I had heard so, I left before I could meet Abu-Abdillah since that wording was sufficient for me.

45 - Abu-Ahmed Al-Khurasani asked Imam Al-Kazim (a.s.) whether atheism preceded polytheism or the opposite. "You have not been

accustomed to ask such questions,' answered the Imam, 'I do not know that you intrude yourself in the theological discussions.' Abu-Ahmed confessed that it had been Husham-bin-Al-Hakam who ordered him to put such a question before the Imam. The Imam, then, answered: Atheism preceded polytheism. The foremost atheist was Iblis about whom Allah says: He refused and he was proud, and he was one of the unbelievers-atheists. Holy Qur'an(2:34) Atheism is one thing while polytheism is not. Polytheism is to believe in one (god) and associate others with him.

46 - As he noticed two men reviling at each other, Imam Al-Kazim (a.s.) commented: The first person to revile is the more wrongful. He should burden-the inconvenience-of his sin as well as the sin of the other unless the other was the aggressor.

47 - On the Day of Resurrection, a caller will summon those whose rewards should be presented by Allah individually. Except those who forgave and reformed themselves, no one will attend.

48 - The liberal well-mannered ones are in the shelter of Allah Who will not abandon them until they reside in Paradise,. Prophets of Allah are all liberal. My father incessantly commanded me to hold on liberality and noble manners until he departed.

49 - As-Sindi-bin-Shahek narrated: When Imam Al-Kazim (a.s.) was dying, I offered to enshroud him. He answered: We, the prophet's family, should cover the expenditure of our first pilgrimage, the dowries of our women, and our coffins from our legal fortunes.

50 - Imam Al-Kazim (a.s.) said to Fadhl-bin-Younus: Convey the good, say the good, and do not be yes-man. "What is yes-man?" asked Fadhl, and the Imam instructed: Do not say, 'I am with people,' or 'I am like others,' for the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: O people, they are only two ways-either good or evil. Do not prefer the way of evil to that of good."

51 - Imam Al-Kazim (a.s.) passed by an ugly villager, greeted him, sat with him, talked with him for a considerable time, and then asked him to settle his needs when he would be in need for him.

Some said, "O son of Allah's Messenger, how do you sit with this one and ask him to settle your needs while he is in need for you?" The Imam (a.s.) answered: He was one of Allah's servants, a brother in the Book of Allah, and a neighbor in the lands of Allah. He and we enjoy the same best father-Adam (a.s.) and the same best religion that is Islam. Perhaps, our need will someday be in his hand and we will have to sit modestly before him. Imam Al-Kazim (a.s.) then recited a poetic verse: We regard even those who do not deserve our regard so that we will not be friendless.

52 - Asking for-financial-help is acceptable only in blood money that is imposed on an insolvent, heavy debts, and extreme poverty.

53 -The best kind of alms-giving is to help the weak.

54 -The astonishment of the ignorant at the intelligent is greater than the astonishment of the intelligent at the ignorant.

55 -For the steadfast, the misfortune is one, while it is two for the impatient.

56 -Only the sufferers of injustice can realize its intensity.

57. Anyone who acknowledges God should not complain when his earnings are delayed and should not accuse God of His acts.

58. As a man asked him about conviction, Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) answered: The conviction is to depend upon God, submit to Him, consent to His acts, and entrust Him with the affairs.

59. Abdullah bin Yahya said: Within the supplication that I wrote to Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him), there was the sentence, 'Praise be to God as much as the utmost of His knowledge.' The Imam answered my missive saying:

Do not say, 'the utmost of His knowledge,' because His knowledge has no limits. You may say, 'the utmost of His satisfaction.'

60. As a man asked him about the munificent, Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) answered: Your question has two references. If you refer to the created munificent, I can tell you that he is the one who fulfills what God has imposed upon him, while the miserly is the one who withholds what God has imposed upon him. If you refer to the All-munificent God, I can tell you that He is the All-munificent whether He gives or not. If He gives, He gives you what is not yours, and if He does not give, He deprives you of what in not yours.

61. Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said to one of his adherents:

Fear God and say the truth even if it will cause you to perish, for your salvation lies in telling the truth. Fear God and leave the wrong even if it will save you, for your perdition lies in telling the wrong.

62. As his agent swore he had not betrayed him, Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said to him: To betray me and waste my wealth are the same. However, betrayal is more harmful for you.

63. Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said: Beware of depriving anyone in fields of obedience to God lest, you will lose two folds in fields of disobedience to God.

64. Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said: The believer is like the two pans of a balance — the more faith he enjoys the more misfortunes he faces.

65. Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said as he stopped near a grave:

It is quite proper to leave the first of a matter the end of which is this (grave). It is also quite proper to fear the end of a thing the first of which is this (grave).

66. Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said: He who speaks in the Essence of God will perish, he who seeks power will perish, and he who feels self-conceited will perish.

67. Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said: The supplies of this world and the religion are difficult. Whenever you extend your hand towards any source of the worldly supplies, you will found out that a sinful has preceded you there. When you intend to obtain a source of the religious supplies, you will not find anyone helping you.

68. Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said: Four deeds are originated from extreme solicitude. They are eating soil, crumbling the clay, clipping the nails with the teeth, and biting the hair of the beard. Looking at three things improves the sight. They are verdure, flowing water, and handsome faces.

69. Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said: Good neighborhood is not abstinence from harm. It is to tolerate the harm (of the neighbors).

70. Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said: Do not take liberties with your friend. You should keep any quantity of respect among you lest you will lose prudency.

71. Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said to one of his sons: O son, let not God see you committing an act of disobedience against which He warned you, and let Him not miss you in an act of obedience to Him of which He ordered you.

Keep serious and do not convince yourself that you are worshipping and obeying God perfectly, because no one can achieve perfection in the fields of worshipping God. Beware of joking because it extinguishes the illumination of your faith and disgraces you personality. Beware of indolence and laziness because they both prevent you from receiving your shares of the pleasures of this world and the world to come.

72. Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said: When injustice predominates over the right, it is unacceptable to expect good from anybody before investigation.

73. Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said: Kissing on the mouth is not acceptable except from the wife and the little child.

74. Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said: Try to divide your time into four parts. The first part should be dedicated to (secret) supplication to God, the second to seeking earnings, the third to associating with the friends and the trusty people who show you your defects and treat you sincerely, and the fourth to your legal pleasures. Through this part, you can manage the other three parts. Do not think of poverty and long age.

He who thinks of poverty will be stingy and he who thinks of long age will be acquisitive. Offer a share of the worldly pleasures to yourselves by enjoying moderately the legal pleasures that do not injure your personality. Make such pleasures help you fulfill your religious duties perfectly. It is said that, "As for those who neglect the legal worldly pleasures completely and adhere to the religious duties or neglect the religious duties and adhere to the worldly affairs, they are not from us.

75. Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said: Learn the religious question, for jurisprudence is the key of intelligence, the perfection of worship, and the means to the high standings and the respectful positions in this world and the world to come. The priority of the knowledgeable over the worshipper is as same as the priority of the sun over the stars. God will not accept the deeds of those who avoid learning the religious questions.

76. Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said to Ali bin Yaqttin: The expiation of working with the (unjust) rulers is to treat the friends with kindness.

77. Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said: Whenever people perpetrate unprecedented sins, God will inflict upon them unexpected misfortunes.

78. Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) said: In the time of the just ruler, you should thank and he will gain rewards.

In the time of the unjust ruler, you should tolerate and he will burden the punishment of the sin. Abu Hanifa related: After I had performed the hajj I went to Medina to visit Abu Abdillah As-Sadiq (peace be upon him). I entered his house and sat in the entrance

waiting for his permission. After a while, a male toddler went out. "O boy," I asked, "where should the stranger excrete in your country?" The boy asked for a respite before he sat to a wall and spoke: You should be away from riversides, places were fruits fall, yards of mosques, and roadbeds. You should also hide against a wall, lift up your dress, avoid turning the face or the back to the kiblah, and then you can excrete anywhere.

I was highly admired by the wording of that boy. I therefore asked about his name. "I am Musa bin Ja'far bin Mohammed bin Ali bin Al-Hussein bin Ali bin Abi Talib," answered he.

I then asked him about the source of the acts of disobedience to God.

He answered: The source of any sin is unquestionably one of three: either the God, the God and the servant, or the servant. If God is the source of sins –yet He is not-, then it is improper for Him to punish the servants for what they did not commit. If God and the servants are together the source of sin –yet this is not accurate-, then it is improper for the stronger partner to wrong the weak partner. If the servant is the source of the sins –and this is quite accurate-, then the Lord may pardon out of His generosity and liberty or punish for the commitment of such a sin. After I had heard so, I left before I could meet Abu Abdillah since that wording was sufficient for me.

79. Abu Ahmed Al-Khurasani asked Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) whether atheism preceded polytheism or the opposite. 'You have not been accustomed to ask such questions,' answered the Imam, 'I do not know that you intrude yourself in the theological discussions.' Abu Ahmed confessed that it had been Husham bin Al-Hakam who ordered him to put such a question before the Imam. The Imam, then, answered: Atheism preceded polytheism. The foremost atheist was Iblis about whom God says: He refused and he was proud, and he was one of the unbelievers –atheists-. Atheism is one thing while polytheism is not. Polytheism is to believe in one (god) and associate others with him.

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82. As-Sindi bin Shahek narrated: When Imam Al-Kazim (peace be upon him) was dying, I offered to enshroud him. He answered: We, the Prophet's family, should cover the expenditure of our first pilgrimage, the dowries of our women, and our coffins from our legal fortunes.

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"O people, they are only two ways — either good or evil. Do not prefer the way of evil to that of good."

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Some said, "O son of God's Messenger, how do you sit with this one and ask him to settle your needs while he is in need for you?" The Imam (peace be upon him) answered:

He was one of God's servants, a brother in the Book of God, and a neighbor in the lands of God. He and we enjoy the same best father — Adam (peace be upon him) and the same best religion that is Islam. Perhaps, our need will someday be in his hand and we will have to sit modestly before him.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Imam al-Reza

Imam al-Reza (a.s.)

(765 AD – 818 AD)

Imam ‘Alī ibn Mūsā al-Rizā was born on the eleventh of Dhu al-Qi'dah, 148 AH (765 AD) in the house of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (the seventh Imam) in Medina. His mother was Bibi Najmah, who was considered to be the most notable and distinguished lady in the realm of wisdom and faith. Imam al-Riza took over the position of the Imamate as the eighth of the Twelve Imams, after his father, Imam al-Kazim. Imam al-al-Riza was poisoned by the Abbasid Khalifeh, al-Ma'moun, and martyred on May 26, 818 (AD), in the city of Tus (Persia).

Right from his early age, Imam al-Riza accompanied his father, Imam al-Kazim, who repeatedly used to tell his friends, "Ali al-Riza shall be the Imam after me," emphasizing that the Imam al-Riza was the inheritor of his office, the trustee of his school and the Imam to whom Muslims should refer after him. Like his father and grandfather, Imam al-Riza’s education came at the hands of his father. He imbibed from his father his knowledge, morals and good manners. He availed himself of the instructions of his learned father for thirty one years till the Imam al-Kazim was taken to Baghdad to suffer the hardship of imprisonment till his death. Imam al-Riza was, thus, the most acknowledged scholar and the most qualified to be the leader and the

guide of Muslims. He would later lead and feed the school of Ahlul-Bayt (a.s.) with Divine knowledge and religious sciences.

Imam al-Riza was 35 when Imam al-Kazim was martyred in 799, and he was given the responsibility of the Imamate. Imam al-Riza was not looked upon favorably by the Abbasid Khalifeh, Hārūn Rashīd, and the people of Medina were disallowed from visiting Imam al-Riza and learning from him. People could not visit the Imam freely seek his knowledge, and he had little chance to teach his followers openly. Harun attempted to kill him but was unsuccessful.

After the death of Hārūn al-Rashīd, Hārūn's two sons began fighting for control of the Abbāsid Empire. One son, al-Amin, had an Arab mother and thus had the support of Arabs, while his half-brother al-Ma'moun had a Persian mother and the support of Persia. al-Ma'moun believed that Persia was sympathetic to the Hashemites and asked for Imam al-Riza to meet him in Persia. He seemed to have no choice but to proceed on this hazardous journey. The Imam left his family in Medina and migrated to the city of Merve in Persia. It was a long journey to Merve and the Imam set out on this momentous journey with some of his friends who were loyal to him throughout his life. While Imam al-Riza was with al-Mamoun in Merv, a conference was arranged on religions to which the leaders of different sects were invited. The religious leaders, including Zoroastrains and Christians and Jews, gathered to discuss certain religious issues with the Imam and to hear what the Imam of the Ahlul-Bayt had to say to impress them of their spiritual abilities and excellences. It was in these discussions with leaders of other faiths that the Imam clarified the position of infallibility of the Prophets and of the guided Imams. History narrates a great deal of his scholarly stances and intellectual discourses in which he achieved victory over those who opposed the Divine Message, excelling in various branches of scholarship with which he provided the seekers of knowledge and the thinkers of the time.

In what follows, some selected commandments, hadith and wise maxims are given of the Imam al-Reza’s teaching with regard to the area of moral conducts and ethical values.

Wisdom and Moral in the Words of Imam al-Reza (a.s.)

The value of wisdom and moral is when it sets out of its leading springs to make its way in life to plant goodness, beauty, and love, and to uproot evil, corruption, and hatred. The individual who wishes to spiritually build his inner self wholly has to search for the wisdom whereby he discovers his shortcomings which distance him from virtuous humanity, and he has to look for the moral which brings him closer to his Lord and which deepens the roots of iman within him. This is the value of wisdom and of moral, and this is their plentiful product. It is the dividing line between the man of righteousness, and the man of evil. Good wisdom is the one, which sows within the depths of the individual the seed of light in order to grow there from a plant blossoming with goodness, love, and beauty.

So let us read the pure wisdom and the magnificent moral in the words of Imam al-Reza (a.s.), then let us open up our souls in order to plant therein the seed of light. After that, let us look after that plant that will come out of that seed so that we may harvest from it the fruit of iman, the belief in God, the belief in the principles and morals which God has legislated for us in order to be able to build ourselves from within, and to be able to rise thereby above the level of wishes and desires to the level whereby the individual becomes a true human being in his pure link with his Lord, in his honest dealing with his brother man, and in his own emancipation from worshipping his own ego.

The first moral we meet as we read the words of the Imam (a.s.) is his statement: "It is not adoration to perform the fast or the prayers a great deal; adoration is to contemplate upon God a great deal." What the Imam (a.s.) meant from such a definition of what adoration in its deep context is all about is his correction of the general attitude towards a rite such as the fast or the daily prayers, saying that prayers are not merely the prescribed movements accompanying quotations relevant particularly to prayers, nor is the fast merely the abstention from eating and drinking and such things. These particular movements and this performance are nothing more than the outer frame of the picture, while the adoration is the context which lies beyond the picture. What the Imam (a.s.) aims at by making this statement is making us aware of the reality from which we have to set out in performing the rite we are supposed to perform, and to distance us from the stagnation of the empty routine which causes us to lose the greatly spiritual meanings the rites we perform are intended to help us live. So, what is adoration, after all?

The Imam (a.s.) says that it is a great deal of contemplation upon the Almighty. It is not a great deal of fasting or prayers which do not go beyond the particular movements and timings as a routine action an individual has become accustomed to be doing during certain times away from the deep context of belief. Such is not adoration, for how many are those who perform their prayers and uphold their fast and at the same time commit the greatest of sins and perform various kinds of immoralities, yielding to wishes and desires, without being able towards them to take control of themselves, without trying to give authority over them to the deterring power of iman in order to avoid slipping into the paths of misguidance? The prayers of such individuals and their fast are nothing more than movements and performances which have lost their sense of wisdom and spiritual integrity.

Abundant contemplation upon the Will of God is by itself a form of worship and, at the same time, a starting point of every adoration and ritual. When someone feels harmony while contemplating upon the cosmos and its Creator, and the particles of life and their secrets filling the general existence of the cosmos, he cannot avoid feeling how small he is before this great Power which created this

system in such perfection, determined its rules with such precision and exactness; and when he, through his power of reason, feels that the Power of the Great Creator surrounds this cosmos, that everything in existence is overwhelmed by its Authority and Might, without any avenue through which one may escape from the center of the Power controlling it..., then he cannot help feeling a deep belief in the perfecting Creator, and a genuine awe before the manifestations of such Greatness.

When man considers the bounties God has bestowed upon him which can never be exhausted while satisfying his continuous needs, and His absolute ability to deprive him of them any moment He wishes, without the existence of any power that would forbid Him from doing so, he would surely then thank Him sincerely and be grateful to Him, distancing himself from the hated elements of disbelief.

When man realizes the wisdom behind his own creation and the end awaiting him that will take him to another life so that the doers of good will be rewarded for their good deeds and the doers of evil will be punished for their evil, he cannot help considering what secures his salvation while doing what he does, and feeling angry at whatever displeases God. The feeling one develops of all of this and the comprehension of all of this is by itself a form of adoration because this feeling is the conscientious path which takes man to knowledge, and knowledge is the foundation of belief. At the same time, such comprehension gives adoration the vast spiritual meaning for which it was decreed.

A man asked him once about the meaning of the verse, "Whoever relies on God, He suffices him." He said: "Reliance on God is in various degrees one of which is that you rely on Him in everything related to you, and when He does something to you which you know will not bring you anything good, you rely on His wisdom in doing it, so you nevertheless put your trust in Him willingly. Another is to believe in the Unseen regarding God of which you have no knowledge, so you relied on Him and on His custodians, trusting in Him in their regard, and in others."

He was asked once about the extent of such reliance. He said, "It is that you fear none save God." What the Imam here means is that you submit to the Will of God and accept His decree. Ahmed ibn Najm asked him about the pride which spoils one's deeds. He said: "Pride is degrees; among them is that one sees his bad deed as good, so he likes it and feels proud of it; another is that one believes in God and feels he is doing Him a favor by believing in Him, whereas He is the One who enabled that person to believe in Him." He, peace be upon him, said once, "If one lacks five attributes, do not expect to gain anything good out of him for your life in this world or in the life to come: if his lineage is known to be untrustworthy, if his nature lacks generosity, if his temper lacks balance, if he lacks a noble conduct, and if he lacks fear of his Lord." He was asked once who a lowly person is. He said, "Anyone who has something to distract him from God."

Among his wise sayings are the following: "God abhors hearsay, the loss of one's funds (through foolishness), and excessive questioning." "To be courteous to people is to cross half the way to achieving wisdom." "The mind of a Muslim is not complete except after he acquires ten merits: God accepts his good deeds, he is trustworthy, he sees as plentiful what little good others do for him, while seeing his own abundant good as little; he does not fret from being asked for favors, nor does he feel tired of constantly seeking knowledge; poverty reached in order to please God is better for him than wealth accumulated otherwise; to be subjected to power while trying to serve God is better in his regard than achieving power over his foe, and obscurity he prefers over fame." Then he said, "And the third one..., do you know what the third one is?" It was said to him, "What is it?" He said, "Whenever he meets someone, he says, `He is better than me and more pious.' People are two types: a person better than him and more pious, and one who is more evil than him and more lowly. If he meets the one who is more evil than him and more lowly, he would say to himself `Maybe the goodness of this (statement) is implied, and it is better that he hears such a compliment, while my own goodness is apparent and it is detrimental to me.' And when he sees someone better than him and more pious, he would humble himself before him trying to raise himself to his level. So if he does that, his glory

will be higher, his reputation will be better, and he will become distinguished above his contemporaries."

"Silence is one of the gates of wisdom. Silence wins the love of others. It is an indication of everything good."

"Everyone's friend is his reason; his enemy is his ignorance."

"Among the habits of Prophets is cleanliness."

"One who is blessed with plenty must spend generously on his family."

"If you mention someone who is present, use a kunya (surname) for him, and if he is absent, mention his full name." "Time will come when one's safety lies in ten things nine of which are in staying aloof from people, and the tenth in staying silent."

"Whoever scrutinizes his behavior wins; whoever does not loses.

Whoever fears consequences will live safely. Whoever learns a moral from others achieves insight, and whoever achieves insight achieves wisdom, and whoever achieves wisdom achieves knowledge. One who befriends the ignorant will be worn out. The best of wealth is that which safeguards one's honor. The best of reason is one's knowledge of his own self. If a true believer becomes angry, his anger does not cause him to abandon righteousness; when he is pleased, his pleasure will not tempt him into wrong-doing, and when he achieves power, he does not take more than what rightfully is his." "If one's attributes become plentiful, they will relieve him from having to win praise by mentioning them." "Do not pay attention to the view of someone who does not follow your advice for his own good. Whoever seeks guidance from the appropriate source will never slip, and if he slips, he will find a way to correct himself." "People's hearts are sometimes coming towards you, sometimes keeping away from you; sometimes they are active, sometimes they are relaxed. If they come along, they will achieve wisdom and understanding, and if they stay away, they will be exhausted and worn out; so, take

them when they come to you and when they are active, and shun them when they stay away or are relaxed."

"Accompany with caution the person who has authority over you; be humble when in the company of a friend; stay alert when facing an enemy, and mingle with the public with a smile on your face." "Postponement is detrimental to the fulfillment of desires. Fulfillment is the gain of the strict. Wastefulness is the calamity of one who can afford it.

Miserliness tears up honor. Passion invites trouble. The best and most honorable of virtues is to do others favors, to aid the one who calls for help, to bring the hope of the hopeful to reality, not to disappoint the optimist, to have an ever increase of the number of friends when you are alive, and the number of those who will cry when you die."

"The miser one is never restful. The envious is never pleased. The grumbling is never loyal. The liar has no conscience." "One who struggles to satisfy the needs of his family shall have more rewards than those who make jihad in the Way of God."

He (a.s.) was asked once who the best of believers are; he said, "They are the ones who are excited with expectation when they do a good deed, who pray for God's forgiveness when they commit a bad one, who show gratitude when they are granted something, who are patient when they are tried, who forgive those who anger them." He (a.s.) was asked once, "How did you start your day?" He answered, "With a shorter life-span, with our deeds being recorded, with death round our necks, with Fire behind our backs, and we do not know what will be done to us."

He (a.s.) said, "Wealth is not accumulated except by five means: extreme miserliness, a long-standing optimism, an overwhelming care, a boycott of the relatives, and a preference of this life over the life to come."

Ali ibn Shu'ayb said that he once visited Abul-Hassan Ali al-Reza (a.s.) who asked him, "O Ali! Do you know whose subsistence is the best?" He answered, "You, master, know better than me." He

said, "It is that of the one whose others' subsistence is improved through his own. Do you know who has the worst subsistence?" Ali answered, "You know better than me!" The Imam (a.s.) answered saying, "It is that of the one who does not include others in it." Then he added, "O Ali! Be thoughtful to the boons for they are wild: if they leave people, they never come back to them. O Ali! The worst of people is someone who stops his contributions to charity, eats by himself, and whips his slave."

He (a.s.) also said the following:

"Your assistance of the weak is better than your act of charity." "No servant of God achieves true belief except when he acquires three attributes: He derives juristic deductions of the creed; he is wise regarding his livelihood, and he is patient when faced with calamities."

"Beware of one who wants to offer you advice by speaking behind others' backs; he does not realize how bad his own end shall be." He (a.s.), upon the death of al-Hassan ibn Sahl, said, "To congratulate one for a reward in store for him is better than to console him on a quick calamity." This is a magnificent bouquet of shining statements of Imam al-Reza (a.s.) which emanate with wisdom, overflow with iman, and over brim with good fruits. In them, the Imam (a.s.) defines glorious ethical and educational manners, the upright conduct of true belief, offering some glimpses of humanity for social cooperation and coexistence a Muslim is supposed to implement if he wants to be in harmony with the principles of Islam which are the turning point of social change from an oppressive ignorant society to an advanced civilized society built upon virtue and love, justice and equity.

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Sayings of Imam al-Riza (a.s.)

❖ The Excellence of Reason

As for reason, it is the best favor which Allah has given to man and through which He distinguished him from grazing animals. Imam

al-Rida`, peace be on him, spoke about reason in some of his traditions, which are as follows:

A. He, peace be on him, said: "Everyone's friend is his reason; his enemy is his ignorance." How wonderful this wise statement is! That is because reason is the great friend of man; it protects him, safeguards him from the afflictions and misfortunes of this world. The great enemy of man is ignorance, which throws him into deep mazes of this world.

B. Abu Hashim al-Ja'far narrated: [We were with al-Rida, peace be on him. We discussed reason and he said:] "O Abu Hashim, reason is a free gift from Allah, and politeness is acquisition. He who undertakes politeness has power over it. He who undertakes reason increases (himself) through that nothing but ignorance. " As for courtesy, it is an acquisitive matter. Man can acquire it. As for reason, it is a free gift from Allah, the Most High. Man cannot acquire it.

C. Al-Hasan b. al-Jahm reported: [Reason was mentioned in the presence of Abu` al-Hasan al-Rida`, peace be on him, and he said:] "(None) pays attention to the men of religion who have no reason." I (i.e. al-Hasan b. al-Jahm) said: "May I be your ransom. In our opinion there is no harm upon the people who describes this affair. Do they have not reason?" "They are not from among those whom Allah addressed," he replied, "Allah created reason and ordered it to come forward, and it came forward. Then He ordered it to go back and it went back. Hence He said: 'By My might and majesty, I have not created anything better than you or more lovable to me than you. I punish (men) and reward (them) through you. "

Allah did not create anything better than reason. All religious obligations depend on it, hence he who loses his reason is not required to perform them and is not sinful when he commits sins. That is because reason is the only condition in the correctness of religious duties and their validity on him whom performs them.

D. He, peace be on him, said: "The best reason is that man knows his own soul. "

When man knows how his soul was shaped and ended, he will gain abundant good. That is because such knowledge will drive him away from evil inclinations, urges him to cling to good inclinations, and makes him know his Almighty Creator. It has been mentioned in the tradition: "He who knows his own soul knows his Lord."

❖ Reflecting on the Affair of Allah

Imam al-Rida, peace be on him, said: "Worship is not abundant prayer and fasting; rather it is abundant reflecting on the affair of Allah, the Great and Almighty."

Reflecting on the creatures of Allah, contemplating His wonderful creatures, and thinking of the secrets and wonders of this universe are clear evidence for the existence of the Almighty Creator. When man knows his Lord, he is safe from evil and committing crime, and he becomes the source of bestowal and good for his own soul and his society.

❖ Reckoning Soul

He, peace be on him, said: "He who reckons his own soul is successful; he who is heedless of it is unsuccessful. "

If man reckons his own soul with regard to doing good and evil deeds and prevents it from committing evil deeds, he will be sublime and attain success and good. If he is heedless of it, he will throw himself into endless evil.

❖ Clemency

He, peace be on him, said: "Man is not worshipful unless he is clement. "

Clemency is the noblest quality by which man is distinguished. Clemency toward evildoer and pardoning aggressor indicate that soul is sublime and has reached the highest degree of perfection. Through clemency man is the master of other than him and is a good guide to his own society.

❖ **Silence**

He, peace be on him, said: "Some signs of understanding are clemency, knowledge, and silence. Silence is one of the doors to wisdom. It brings about love and is evidence for all good. "

Silence and controlling the tongue protect man from great evil and turn him aside from detested things which result from speech and utterance.

❖ **Humbleness**

He, peace be on him, said: "Humbleness is that you give to men that which you want them to give to you."

He, peace be on him, wrote to Mohammed b. Sinan: "Humbleness is degrees. One of them is that man should know the measure of his own soul and sincerely place it in its rank. He does not like to do anything for others except that which he wants others to do for him. If others do evil deed for him, he repels the evil deed with a good one. He restrains his anger, pardons men, and Allah loves good-doers" The reality of humbleness is that man should honor men and treat them kindly just as he wants them to treat him in the same manner. Humbleness is evidence for the honor and exaltedness of soul. Men love and honor him who shows humbleness toward them. Meanwhile Allah loves and exalts him.

❖ **Believer's Noble Qualities**

He, peace be on him, said: "The believer is not believing unless he has three qualities: a quality from his Lord, a quality from his Prophet, and a quality from his ruler. As for the quality from his Lord, it is concealing his secret. Allah, the Great and Almighty has said: The Knower of the unseen, so He does not reveal His secrets to any. As for the quality from his Prophet, it is humoring with men, for Allah, the Great and Almighty ordered His Prophet to humor with men, saying: Take to forgiveness and enjoin good. As for the quality from his ruler, it is patience during prosperity and adversity. " How noble qualities are these! They raise the level of man to the top of honor and perfection, and they turn him aside from falling into destruction.

❖ The Best and Worst of Men

'Ali b. Shu'ayb said: [I visited Abu al-Hasan al-Rida, peace be on him, and he asked me:] "O 'Ali, do you know whose subsistence is the best?" "Master, you know better than me," I replied "It is that of one through whom others' subsistence is improved," he explained.

"O 'Ali, do you know who has the worst subsistence?" he asked.

"Master, you know better than me," I answered.

"It is that of the one who does not include others in it," he declared.

The Imam went on advising him to do good and kindness to men, saying: "O 'Ali, be thoughtful to the boons, for they are wild: if they leave people, they never come back to them. O 'Ali, the worst of men is he who stops his contributions to charity, eats by himself, and whips his slave." These words summons man to do good and kindness to men.

❖ Faith and Islam

He, peace be on him, said: "Faith is a degree above Islam; Allah-fearingness is a degree above faith; and nothing less than Allah-fearingness has been divided among men." Certainty of Allah is the best degree of faith and is one of qualities of the great Allah-fearing whose hearts Allah examines for faith.

❖ Vainglory corrupts deeds

Ahmed b. Najm asked Imam al-Rida about vainglory which corrupted deeds, and he, peace be on him, answered: "Vainglory is degrees: One of them is that the deed of a servant is embellished and he regards it as good. One of them is that the servant believes (in Allah) and reminds Him of favor, while Allah shows kindness toward him. The vainglory, in the second sense, results from unbelief and unripe thoughts, and hence it corrupts deeds.

❖ Sins

He, peace be on him, said: "When the servants commit sins which they have not known before, affliction which they have not known before befalls them.

Men have committed terrible kinds of sins and acts of disobedience which have not been known before. Hence Allah has let down upon them various kinds of afflictions and misfortunes which they have not known before.

❖ Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil

Imam al-Rida (a.s.) said: "Either you enjoin (men) to do good and forbid (them) from evil or Allah will employ the wicked from among you over you, hence the righteous from among you supplicate (Him), but (He) does not respond to them." Enjoining good and forbidding evil is an original method in Islamic life; hence neglecting it leads to bad results of which are spreading abominable things and the supplication of the righteous is not accepted.

❖ He Who loves the Disobedient!

He, peace be on him, said: "He who loves the disobedient is disobedient; he who loves the obedient is obedient. He who helps a wrongdoer is a wrongdoer; he who deserts a wrongdoer is just.

There is no kinship between Allah and any, and the protection of Allah is not attained but through obedience. "

He who loves the work of people, he will be mustered in their band, just as it has been mentioned in the tradition. So whoever loves the disobedient is disobedient, and whoever loves the obedient is obedient.

❖ The Good Men

The Imam, peace be on him, was asked about the good men, and he replied: "It is they who are delighted when they do good, ask

Allah's forgiveness when they do evil, give thanks when they are given, are patient when they are tried, and pardon (men) when they become angry. " He who has such noble qualities is indeed one of the good men and is perfect and meritorious.

❖ Honest Work

He, peace be on him, said: "The reward of him who works to spare his family is greater than that of the struggler in the way of Allah." The work for sparing family is struggle in the way of Allah, honor which the worker attains, and glory of which he boasts.

❖ Perfect Reason

He, peace be on him, said: "The discretion of a Muslim is not perfect except after he acquires ten qualities: Allah accepts his good deeds, he is trustworthy, he sees as plentiful the little good that others do for him, while seeing his own abundant good as little; he does not fret from being asked for favor, nor does he feel tired of constantly seeking knowledge; poverty reached in order to please Allah is better for him than wealth accumulated otherwise; to be subjected to power while trying to serve Allah is better in his regard than achieving power over his foe, and obscurity he prefers over fame." Then he, peace be on him, said: "And the tenth (one), do you know what the tenth (one) is?"

He was asked: "What is it?" He, peace be on him, replied: "Whenever he sees someone, he says to himself: 'He is better than me and more pious. People are two types: a person better than him and more pious, and one who is more evil than him and more lowly. If he meets the one who is more evil than him and more lowly, he says to himself: 'Maybe, the goodness of this (statement) is implied, and it is better that he hears such a compliment, while my own goodness is apparent and it is detrimental to me. And when he sees someone better than him and pious, he would humble himself before him trying to raise himself to his level. So if he does that, his glory will be higher, his reputation will be better, and he will become distinguished above his contemporaries. "He who has these ten qualities is indeed perfect in faith and reason.

Moreover Allah exalts him, raise his reputation in the world, and gives him the highest degree on the Day of Resurrection.

❖ The Reality of Reliance on Allah

A man asked the Imam about these words of Him, the Exalted: "Whoever relies on Allah, He suffices him. "He, peace be on him, answered: "Reliance (on Allah) is in various degrees one of which is that you rely on Him in everything related to you, and when He does something to you which you know will not bring you anything good, you rely on His wisdom in doing it, so you nevertheless put your trust in Him willingly. Another you believe in the Unseen regarding Allah of which you have no knowledge, so you relied on Him and on His custodians, trusting in Him in their regard and in others. "

The Imam, peace be on him, gives a clear picture of the reality of reliance on Allah, the Exalted, which is that man should entrust all his affairs to Him, the Exalted, for this is pure faith and certitude in Allah.

❖ The Pillars of Faith

He, peace be on him, said: "Faith is four pillars: trust in Allah, satisfaction with Allah's decree, submission to Allah's command, and entrusting (affairs) to Allah. The Righteous Servant1 said: And I entrust my affair to Allah, so Allah protected him from the evil deeds of what they had schemed." Faith in Allah stands on these four pillars. When a person has them, he attains the top of faith.

❖ Noble Traits

He, peace be on him, said: "If one lacks five attributes, do not expect to gain anything good out of him for your life in this world or your life to come: if his lineage is known to be untrustworthy, if his nature lacks generosity, if his temper lacks balance, if he lacks a noble conduct, and if he lacks fear of his Lord." He who has these noble qualities scores a great success in honor and manhood and is hoped for help and generosity.

❖ Giving Thanks for Favors

He, peace be on him, said: "He who does not thank the benefactor from among the creatures does not thank Allah, the Great and Almighty." Showing gratitude to the benefactor for his favor is a must. He who does not thank him and denies him does not thank Allah, the Great and Almighty, for His favors toward him.

❖ His Commandments

The Imam, peace be on him, gave some commandments to his close Shï'ites. The following are some of them:

A. His Commandments to Ahmed b. Abu Nasr.

The Imam, peace be on him, gave some commandments to Ahmed b. Abu Nasr. The following are some of them: "Do not be tired of supplicating, for it is of great importance with Allah. Be patient, seek the lawful, tighten (your) bonds of kin with gifts, beware of showing enmity toward men, for we, the members of the House, join him who cuts us off, and do good for him who does evil for us, so, by Allah, we see good results through that. "He advised him to cling to noble moral traits and good deeds through which man becomes exalted.

B. His Commandments to Ibrahïm b. Abu Mahmud

The Imam, peace be on him, gave some commandments to Ibrahïm b. Abu Mahmud. (He said to him): [My father told me on the authority of his fathers, on the authority of Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his Family, who said:] "He who listens to a speaker serves him. If the speaker (talks on behalf of) Allah, he serves Allah. If the speaker (talks on behalf) of Satan, he serves Satan." Then he said: "Son of Abu Mahmud, when men go to left and right, then cling to our way, for we cling to him who clings to us and separate ourselves from him who separates himself from us. The least thing through which man deviate from faith is that he calls pebble stone, then he embraces this and renounces those who oppose him. Son of Abu Mahmud, keep in mind what I have told

you about, for I have gathered for you thereby the good of this world and the next"

C. His Commandments to Ahmed and al-Husayn

Ahmed b. 'Umar and al-Husayn b. Yazïd said: "We visited Imam al-Rida, peace be on him, and said to him: 'We were in plenty of provision and ease of livelihood. (Our) state has changed, so supplicate Allah to return that to us.'"

The Imam ordered them to be content and satisfied with that which Allah had apportioned for them, saying: "What do you want? Do you want to be kings? Does it please you to be like Tahir and Herthima while you oppose your doctrine?" One of them interrupted the Imam, saying: "No, by Allah, it does not please me that I possess the gold and silver of the world. I oppose my doctrine." This means that he deviated from the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on him.

The Imam, peace be on him, said: "Allah says: Give thanks, O family of Dawud, and very few of My servants are grateful. Have a good opinion in Allah, for he who has a good opinion of Allah, Allah has a good opinion of him. He who is satisfied with a little provision, his little work is accepted. He who is content with a little lawful thing, his provision is light, his family leads a life of ease and comfort, Allah makes him see the malady of the world and its medicine, brings him out of it sound and (sends him) to the Abode of Peace." The Imam, peace be on him, advised them to cling to contentment which is an everlasting treasure. He made them know that they had something more expensive than silver and gold, which was showing friendship to the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them, who were the greatest favor of Allah toward His righteous servants.

❖ Equality between the Rich and the Poor

The Imam advised his companions (to spread) equality among the rich and the poor with greetings (salam). He said: "He who meets a poor and greets him in a manner different from greeting the rich meets Allah, the Great and Almighty, and He is angry with him."

This commandment represents the great morals of the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them, whom Allah created as mercy for His servants, for they made it incumbent upon their Shï'ites to spread equality among Muslims even through greetings (salam) and made them hate color discrimination.

❖ Smiling at the Believer

The Imam advised his companions to smile at the believer and not to receive him with anger. He, peace be on him, said: "He who smiles at his believing brother, Allah will write a good deed for him, and Allah will not torture him for whom He writes a good deed." The Imams, peace be on them, advised their companions to follow these noble moral traits, that they might be an example to men.

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General Commandments

The Imam, peace be on him, advised his companions and the rest of people to follow these valuable commandments: "Fear Allah, O men, regarding the favors of Allah toward you. Do not repel them from you through disobeying Him. Know that you do not thank Allah for a thing after faith in Him and His Messenger, and after confessing the rights of Allah's friends from among the family of Mohammed, may Allah bless him and his family, more lovable (to Him) than your helping your believing brothers in their world, which is a bridge for you to the Gardens of their Lord. He who does that is among the close friends of Allah." These commandments are full of urging men to fear Allah, the Exalted, to help their brothers, and to show kindness toward them.

❖ Tightening the Bonds of Kin

A group of traditions has been reported from Imam al-Rida, peace be on him, concerning urging his companions and Shï'ites to tighten the bonds of kin. Some of them are as follows:
A. He, peace be on him, said: "If only three years of a person's span of life has remained and he tightens the bond of kin, Allah will make them thirty years, and Allah does whatever He wills."

B. He, peace be on him, said: "We know that nothing increases the span of life except tightening the bonds of kin, to the extent that the person's fixed term is three years and he tightens the bonds of kin, so Allah adds thirty years to his span of life, and hence He makes them thirty-three years. If his fixed term is thirty-three and he cuts off the bonds of kin, Allah subtracts thirty years from it, and makes his fixed term three years. "

C. He, peace be on him, said: [Abu` 'Abd Allah, peace be on him, said:] "Tighten the bonds of kin even through a drink of water. The best thing through which you tighten the bonds of kin is withholding harm from them. Tightening the bonds of kin delays the fixed term and (brings about) love among family." The best means of strengthening social ties is showing kindness toward blood relatives. This will unify their sentiments and feelings and form righteous cells on which society stands.

❖ Wise Sayings of some Prophets

Imam al-Reza, peace be on him, narrated some valuable wise sayings of some prophets, peace be on them. The following are some of them:

- Musa's Whispered Prayers

He, peace be on him, said: "When Musa b. 'Umran whispered (words) to his Lord in prayer, he said: 'My Lord, are You far from me, so I will call out for You? Or are You near, so I will whisper (words to) You in prayer?' Hence, Allah inspired him: 'Musa, I am the Friend of him who remembers Me.' Musa said: 'I am in a state in which You are greater than to be remembered.' Allah said: 'Musa, remember Me in every state. '"

- In the Scriptures of Ibrahïm

He, peace be on him, said: [(Allah says) in the Scriptures of Ibrahïm:] "O vainglorious king, I did not send you in order to build the building nor to gather for this world, but I sent you in order to answer the supplication of the wronged, for I respond to it even if it (issues) from an unbeliever."

- 'Isa with the Disciples

He, peace be on him, said: ['Isa said to the disciples:] "O Children of Isra'ïl, do not grieve for that which escapes you of the world just as the people of the world who do not grieve for that which escapes them of their religion when they attain their world. "

❖ Preaching and Guidance

The narrators and the historians mentioned a group of the worlds and poems of the Imam on preaching and guidance. The following are some of them:

1. Mohammed b. 'Ubayda said: [I visited 'Ali al-Reza`, peace be on him. He sent for Salih b. Sa'ïd, and then he preached to both of us. A part of his preaching was that he said:] "Abu Ja'far (i.e. Imam Mohammed al-Baqir, peace be on him) said: 'Be good without evil; be leaves without thorns. Do not be thorns without leaves and evil without good.'" Then he said: "Surely Allah detests idle talk, wasting money, and much begging."

Then he said: "The children of Isra'ïl became strict, so Allah became strict with them. Musa said to them: 'Slaughter a cow.' They asked: 'What color is it?' They were still so strict that they (were forced to) slaughter a very expensive cow." Then he said: ['Ali b. Abu` Talib said:] "The wise lost wisdom when they placed it with other than its people."

2. Al-Ma'mun wrote the Imam asking him to preach to him, and he wrote him these lines: You are in the world with a period in which the deed of the doer is accepted. Do you not see that death encompasses it and deprives the hopeful of their hope. You hasten to sin as you like and expect repentance from the Acceptor. Death surprisingly comes to people. This is not the deed of the one resolute and wise.

3. The following poetry lines are part of what he composed on preaching:
All of us hope for drawn out fixed term, while death is the blight of expectation.

Let not the false things of desires deceive you, cling to moderation, and leave defects. The world is like perishing shade in which a rider stops and then he departs.

4. He was asked once: "How did you start your day?" He, peace be on him, answered: "With a shorter life-span, with our deeds being recorded, with death round our necks, with Fire behind our backs, and we do not know what will be done to us. "

5. Yasir, the retainer, said: [I heard 'Ali b. Musa` al-Reza`, peace be on him, say:] "This creature (i.e. man) is lonely in three situations: On the day when he is born in the world and sees it, on the day when he dies and sees the next world and its people, and on the day when he is resurrected and sees the rules which he did not see in the world. Allah, the Exalted, greeted Yahya in these three situations and calmed his fear, saying: And peace on him on the day he was born, and on the day he dies, and on the day he is raised to life. 'Isa b. Maryam greeted himself in these three situations, saying: And peace be on me on the day when I was born, and on the day I die, and on the day I am raised to life. "

6. A man complained to the Imam of his brother, and he, peace be on him, composed, saying: Forgive your brother's sin; cover and cloak his defects. Be patient toward the slander of the foolish and the misfortunes of time. Leave the answer as bounty and entrust the wrongdoer to his Lover.

7. Al-Nawfali recited the following poetry lines before the Imam, peace be on him: I have seen that white hair is detested, respect thereby, and sins are not appropriate for it. When the possessor of white hair commit sins, all will say: When will he repent? I will make friends with it through Allah-fearingness until the close fixed term separates us.

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Selected Ahadith (Imam's Sayings)

1. He who compares and likens Allah to his creations is a polytheist and the one who attributes something which has been forbidden for HIM is an infidel

2. Faith is to one grade superior and sublimer to Islam and piety is one degree superior to faith and certitude and certainty is one step superior to faith and nothing more elegant and excellent than certitude has been bestowed upon the sons of Adam (a.s.).

3. Faith has four pillars: Trusting and relying upon Allah, and contentment and pleasure with the divine will, and submission to the ordain and ordinance of Allah, and delegation and turning over (the affairs) to Allah (total submission to Allah).

4. And faith means performing and discharging the obligatory duties and avoiding the committing of forbidden acts and faith is the recognition and knowing (Allah) through the heart and admitting and confessing through the tongue and practicing through the parts of body (physically).

5. One day Imam Reza (a.s.) mentioned Quran and so he described the magnanimity and glory of it's authority and it's miracles saying, "That is the firm cable of Allah and firmest handhold and the ideal and model path, it guides and leads toward paradise and is the savior from the fire (of Hell). It does not corrode and wear out by the passage and flow of time. Moreover, it's continuous repetition and recitation through the tongue does not devalue and depreciate it, since, it is not made to exist for a certain age and period apart from other ages and periods. Instead, it has been made a proof and logic for all human beings. Falsehood does neither find passage in the front and afore of it nor from it's back side.

It has been descended (revealed) by Allah, the All wise, All praise worthy.

6. Rayyan says I said to Imam Reza (a.s.) "What do you say about Quran?" So he replied "It is the speech of Allah, do not exceed and

move ahead of it and do not seek guidance from other than it, otherwise, you would go astray.

7. "Indeed Imamate is the rein of religion and the system of Muslims and the righteousness and welfare of the world and the honor and glory of faithfuls, Verily, Imamate is the growing and ongoing root of Islam and it's elevated and sublime branch.

Services, alms, fasting, Hajj and Jehad (the holy war) attain completion and perfection and the Allah's bounds, sanctions, and ordinances get executed, and the frontiers and boundaries (of Islamic lands) get safe and secure, through Imam.

8. About the workers and officials of sultan (king, ruler). Becoming part of the officials of them and providing of help and assistance to them and putting in endeavor to fulfill their needs and requirements is the equivalent to infidelity. And looking intentionally and purposely at them is one of the great sins which deems one fit to deserve the hell fire.

9. Allah may take pity and be merciful to the servant who resurrects and revives our affair so I said "And how is it that your affair gets revived?" He responded", By learning our knowledge and teaching them to the people.

10 - A faithful will not become (real) faithful till such time he acquires three qualities: A way of Allah's treatment, the Prophet's rule and a rule of his Wali. However, the Allah's treatment is the concealing of his secret. Allah said "The Knower of the unseen! So He does not reveal His secret to any except to him whom He chooses as an apostle. Moreover, the Sunnah and rule of the Prophet (pbuh) is conciliation with the people. So Allah commanded the Prophet (pbuh) to conciliate with the masses saying. "Take to forgiveness and enjoin good." Nevertheless, the rule of his Wali is "Exercising patience and endurance in (the times of) adversities, poverty and apprehensions."

11. The intellect of a Muslim man does not mature and complete till he has ten qualities: 1) Benevolence and benefaction be expected and hoped from him.

2) And people be secure and peaceful from his evil doing. 3) He considers the small amount of benefaction from others as abundant and plentiful. 4) And takes plenty of his own benevolence and goodness to be a meager amount of it.

5) He does not get tired and exhausted by the demands and requirement asked to be fulfilled. 6) He does not get fatigued and restless from seeking knowledge for all the length of his life. 7) He loves poverty more than the plentifulness and affluence, on the course of Allah. 8) And he loves disgrace and abjectness of the way of Allah more than the honor on the course of His enemy. 9) And anonymity is more liked by him than fame. Then he (a.s.) said. "The tenth one and what is the tenth? The person asked him (a.s.) "What is that?" Imam (a.s.) reflected, "He does not see a person but that he says "He is better and more pious than myself."

12. He who takes himself to account gets benefitted and the one who gets negligent and careless about himself bears loss. And the one who fears (Allah) becomes peaceful. And that one who takes lesson becomes most clear sighted and discerning. And he who become most clear sighted understands and he who understands and comprehends becomes knowledgeable and informed.

13. A person asked Imam Reza (a.s.) "Who are the best of servants? So he responded "Those men that when they perform good deed they become glad and when they perform a bad deed they ask the forgiveness (of Allah) and when they are granted they thank (for it). And while they get afflicted and grieved they exercise patience. And when they get enraged and angry they forgive.

14. There are some grades of self conceit. One among them is that the evil acts of a servant gets decorated to him and he takes them for good deeds and boasts and gluts about them and considers them as nice acts performed by him. And one of them is that a servant acquires faith and belief upon Allah and then boasts of a favor conferred upon Allah, whereas, Allah has done him a favor in it.

15. Had Allah not frightened people by paradise and hell even then it would have been obligatory for them to obey Him and not

commit His disobedience because of his favors and kindnesses upon them. And His granting them the beneficences to start with, without any of their rights.

16. If it is asked why people were ordered to fast? It would be answered so that they may know the trouble of hunger and thirst and thus get the idea about the poverty (hunger and thirst) of the Hereafter. And the fast keeper may get humbled, belittled, humiliated, destitute, indigent (more over) they may get the reward of Allah and be patient and forbearing in the wake of the (trouble) they face from hunger and thirst with knowing of Allah and sincerity. So fasting will be the cause of their getting reward. Moreover, this will bring about the control of lustful desires and become the admonitioner in this world. And make them submit to the performance and offering of what has been made obligatory for them and guides them to (the affairs of) Hereafter.

Nonetheless, they by keeping fast understand and comprehend the severeness and extremity and the amount of hardships and miseries that the poor and afflicted ones have to bear in this world. So they give away the obligatory amounts which Allah has made obligation for them to pay out of their wealth.

17. The Jamaat prayers (the collective and assembly prayers) have only been made so that the sincerity, oneness of Allah and the adoring and worshipping of Allah gets obvious, known, apparent and common. Because the show of it will complete the proof of the oneness of Allah to the people of East and West. And will make the hypocrite and the one who has disrespecting attitude, humble and respectful to something which is the cause of admitting and acknowledging the apparent of Islam and the submission to it. And to the effect that the witnesses of people upon the Islam (being Muslim) of each other becomes lawful and possible. Moreover, it becomes the (cause of) cooperation and co- working of them upon good acts and piety and their taking distance from plenty number of evil acts forbidden by Allah.

18. Indeed Allah has commanded three things (in Quran) which are proximated with three others. He ordered the prayers and alms. So the one who offers prayer and does not pay alms, his service is not

accepted from him. And He ordered His thanks giving with that of the parents. So the one who does not thank his parent has not thanked Allah. And He commanded fear of Allah and connecting with the kinship. So the one who does not connect with the blood relations is not afraid of Allah.

19. Do not let the good deeds and ijtehad and endeavor in worship go, depending and trusting upon the love of the Mohammad's (pbuh) house hold.

20. Be careful of greed and jealousy, since, these (vices) have perished the previous nations. And beware of stinginess because it is a calamity which will not be found in a free man and a faithful. This (vice) is against and controversial to faith.

21. Silence is a door among the doors of wisdom. Indeed, silence begets and attracts love it is the proof of all the beneficences.

22. Behave with the friend humbly and with the enemy carefully and the general people, with smiling and blooming face.

23. Allah dislikes futile (useless)talk and squandering the wealth and begging (asking things).

24. The miser does not have any comfort and so does the jealous not have any joy and felicity and the (kings) (rulers) do not have faithfulness and trust worthiness and the liar does not have any manlihood (forbearance).

25. The secret and cause of services (prayers) is that prayer is the confession of the lordship of Allah and negating all kinds of partners and plurality for him. And standing before the omnipotent, with humility, humbleness, and the confession (of sins) and begging forgiveness of the previous sins. And placing the face of dust five times a day as (sign of) honoring and confession of His greatness. And services (prayers) is the cause of remembering Him and taking distance from the arrogance and neglectfulness. Prayers become the cause of humility, submissiveness and humbleness (toward Allah) and the eagerness, keenfulness and enthusiasm regarding the desire of enhancement of material and spiritual progress (both

in the world and hereafter). Moreover, prayers makes a man engaged constantly in the remembrance of Allah both day and night so that he must not forget his Lord, Master, Administrator and Creator, since, forgetfulness will become the cause of rebellion. Man while offering prayer stays in the presence of his Lord and in the state of His remembrance and this very condition constrains and stops him from sins and constrains and refrains him from many kinds of corruptions.

26. And parsimony and avarice makes the honor (of man) spotted (dishonors and disgraces him) and the love of (worldly materials) causes griefs and involvements in problems. And the best and most valuable of virtues is doing good (to others) and providing shelter and refuge to those afflicted and fulfilling the hope of the person having hope from you.

27. Do not acquire and adopt the company of drinker and do not salute him.

28. Allah forbade the drinking of wine, since, it causes corruption, disturbance, and intoxication of the minds of it's drinker and this becomes the cause of his refusing and denying of Allah and uttering obnoxious language about Him and His Prophets. And becomes the cause of all the sins including murdering and accusing falsely chaste woman of adultery and committing adultery and lessening of abstinence and refraining from forbidden deeds (sins). So this is the reason of it that all the drinks which intoxicate are prohibited and forbidden. Since these drinks too have the same negative results which the wine has got.

29. Seven things short of seven other things are making (as if) a mockery. The one who repents through his tongue but he is not ashamed at his heart, has cut a joke with himself. And the one who asks Allah succor and does not put in effort has mocked himself. And the person who asks for foresightedness and does not be careful so he has made a mockery with himself. And the one who asks paradise from Allah and does not be patient over the hardships and calamities has made a fun of himself. And the one who exercises remembrance of Allah and does not get prepared

and set his foot ahead towards meeting HIM has cut a joke with himself.

30. Get connected to your kinship even it may be means of a drinking water with them. And the supreme and superb kind of connecting with the kinship as to avoid annoying them.

31. Give alms although with a small amount of a thing because indeed all that is intended for the sake of Allah; although those may be meager and small yet becomes great, and magnanimous by virtue of the righteousness and purity of intention.

32. The one who happens to meet a poor Muslim and salutes him against the way he salutes a wealthy person shall meet Allah on the resurrection day in a way that He will be angry with him.

33. Meet and see each other so that you get friendlier with each other.

34. The one who repents upon the sins is like the one who does not have a sin.

35. Cleanliness is from the morality and character of Prophets.

36. The best wealth is the one by which the honor of man is protected.

37. The weapon of the Prophets is essential for you. When asked "What is the weapon of Prophets". He said "supplication!".

38. Be the mercy of Allah upon you, know it that Allah has forbidden all (forms of) gambling and ordained the servants to avoid it and named it dirt (Contamination) (in His Book, Quran).

And said, "The dirt (filth) is the activity of Satan so avoid it. Such as playing with chess and backgammons and other forms of gambling. And backgammons is worse than chess.

39. The superior most mind is the man's recognition of his self.

40. The best and most respected virtue of a man is to do good and to fulfill the desires of the needy.

41. He who wishes to be the most needless should put his full trust in Allah.

42.As soon as the intimacy appears the awe vanishes. Requisition for help is the beginning of misfortune.

43.Gifts cast out hatred from the heart.

44.One who torments his neighbor is not one of us.

45. Giving alms is the most valuable savings.

46.Good temper could be divided into two categories: Intrinsic, and Voluntary: The possessor of which is considered to be the better person.

47. To be patient in the face of hardships is a virtue but to refrain from forbidden deeds is a greater one.

48. Patience and resignation are considered as the worthiest devotions.

49. The honest man has not betrayed you, but you consider the betrayer as the honest one.

50. You had better avoid the munificence that results in the greater loss to you than the benefits received by your brethren.

51. True faith means: Oral acknowledgement, heart-felt knowledge and the good practice.

52. He who is sure about the divine rewards will be more generous

53. He who adopts someone as a brother in order to provide Allah's consent will be given a chamber in paradise.

54. True devotion not only means excessive saying of prayers and keeping fasts. One ought to meditate on The Divinity profoundly.

55. I wonder at one who purchases the slaves and releases them. Why doesn't he try to make the free people indebted by his good conduct?

56. It is much better to be uninterested in other's properties than to be munificent.

57. He who shows patience in providing Allah's consent will no doubt get more than what he has lost.

58. He who desires to postpone the time of his decease and wishes to have his sustenance increased should observe ties of kinship.

59. God will make happy on the Day of Judgment, the person who has removed the grief from the heart of a believer.

60. To help the disabled is much better than to give alms.

61. There is no better milk for the baby's nourishment than its mother's.

62. He who exposes himself to an open accusation should not blame those who may suspect him.

63. The oppressors will finally be punished.

64. Be good companions of blessings because they are fleeting: once gone away, will not return.

65. To use scent is a manner of the Holy Prophets (a.s.). Cleanliness is the characteristic of the Holy Prophets (a.s.)

66. One who breaks his promise will not be left safe and sound in the unpleasant events.

67. Nothing is more worthy than good temper.

68. You who can not satisfy people with your riches had better try to make them happy with a smiling face and good manners.

69. Silence is one of the gates to wisdom.

70. Man's intellect is his friend and ignorance, his foe.

71. If the men of knowledge present their knowledge to the ignorant people, they have spoiled it.

72. Do not get angry when you are informed of the truth.

73. One ought to see his guests off to the gate.

74. He who causes Allah's wrath in order to provide a king's consent is an apostate.

75. Almightiness is reserved for Allah the One. He who claims the possession of this status will be perished by Allah.

76. If a person holds ill intentions towards another believer, then Allah will not accept his religious deeds.

77. One ought to be open-handed towards his household, lest they wish for his death.

78. The generous are the masters of the people in this world, while the pious are their chiefs on doomsday.

79. Be patient in the face of truth bitter though it might taste to thee.

80. Your mouth is one of the channels through which you make contact with Allah. You had then better keep it clean by brushing your teeth.

81. He who does not offer his thanks to his benefactor has not actually praised Allah the Great and the Glorious.

82. A generous man will eat other's food so that they might partake of his food. A miser refuses to eat the food of others in order to deprive them of his own food.

83. He who blames time should spend a long time blaming.

84. Pure piety is not but avoidance of mortal sins and abstinence from persecuting the faithful.

85. He who acts with no insight looks like a pedestrian who travels on a wrong path. The faster he walks, the deviated he becomes out the straight path.

86. Allah likes not the person who has not defended his assailed house.

87. Reflections is the mirror into which you can look and see your virtues and your evils.

88. Magnanimity is unstable. Trust in Allah will give it stability.

89. Humbleness means treating others the same way as you expect them to treat you.

90. He who tries to keep himself immaculate for forty days, Allah will let the waves of wisdom flow from his heart to his tongue.

91. The forgiving warriors will enjoy divine victory in the battlefields.

92. He who wishes to be the most dear to the people must be virtuous both in public and in secret.

93. Human intellect is a divine blessing but politeness is acquired through endeavoring.

94. Prudence keeps repentance away.

95. Giving alms repels certain catastrophe.

96. He who wishes to be the strongest of all should rely on Allah.

97. The believer who is endowed with a good temper will have the strongest faith.

98. Perfection in intellect is primarily to have faith in Allah and secondly to behave well towards others.

99. The believer's fury will not deviate him from the right path.

100. He who begins his day without being concerned about improving the Muslim's affairs should not be called a Muslim.

101. The true Muslim never teases others with his hand or tongue.

102. He who recognizes his merit will not easily perish.

103. Penalty for ingratitude occurs instantly.

104. Remission is good when not accompanied by blame.

105. Treasures of beneficence include concealment of your good deeds, tolerance in hardships and reticence in disasters.

106. A faithful Muslim never exceeds his legitimate right when he is in power.

107. He who is ambitious will perish. Presidency must be owned by those who are worthy of it.

108. He who chooses his path properly will not slip down. He will never confront a deadlock in case he falls.

109. A generous man is close to Allah, close to paradise, and close to everyone.

110. Keeping others' secrets, patience in hardships and tolerance towards others are all signs of faith.

111. A Muslim should not frighten his brethren.

112. He who reveals his poverty before others will disgrace himself.

113. To be in the company of villians will result in suspecting the good.

114. Resignation, beneficence and certitude are the most precious blessings descended by Heaven.

115. Tolerance, knowledge and silence are the signs found in a jurisprudent.

116. To bear enmity towards the people is the worst provision for the journey to the Hereafter.

117. He who betrays his brethren, causes them losses and deceives them, is not one of us.

118. To be friendly with others denotes one half of wisdom.

119. Never become angry with others and do not ask anything from them. Wish for the people whatever you wish for yourself.

120. Wine and other intoxicating beverages are strictly prohibited by the religious legislation. One sip of such drinks is as illegitimate as a whole barrel is.

121. A wealthy person ought to be generous to his family.

122. Some women are blessings for their husbands who express their love and affection.

123. The Midnight Prayers (Namaz-e-Shab) is recommended (Sunnat) for you. So if a person gets up in the last part of the night and recites Namaz-e-Shab, Allah will save him from the squeeze (fishar) in the grave and grant him immunity from the fire of hell, and will increase his age and sustenance.

124. Whoever goes to the grave of a believer brother, places his hand on it and recites Surah al-Qadr seven times, Allah will keep him away from the troubles of Qayamat.

125. If a person does not have the means to lessen the stock of his bad deeds, he should send Salawat and Salaam on the Holy Prophet of Islam (pbuh) and His progeny abundantly, doing so will decrease (the weight of) his sins.

126. When someone is chosen by Allah to administer the affairs of men, Allah expands his breast for him, places the wellsprings of wisdom in his heart, and inspires him with knowledge, so that he will be able to solve any problem that arises. He will know well the straight path of the truth. Such a one is none other than the Immaculate Imam, who enjoys the aid and support of his Lord and who lies beyond the reach of all errors and sins.

127. The Imam is completely free of sin and pure of all fault. He is celebrated for his knowledge and his forbearance. His existence is a source of pride to the Muslims, of anger to the hypocrites, of perdition to the unbelievers. The Imam is unique in his age, in the sense that no one can attain his rank. No scholar can come within range of his knowledge, and he is unequalled in all his qualities. He possesses all virtues and worthy attributes without any striving on his part, and he is adorned with all lofty characteristics. This is a great gift bestowed on him by Allah in His generosity.

128. Best wealth is that which provides a good name for its owner.

129. He who assesses himself carefully will finally benefit, the negligent will lose out.

130. A person asked Imam Reza (a.s.), "Who are the best of the servants?" He replied, "Those who get happy when they perform a good deed and whenever they do a bad and evil work they ask forgiveness from Allah. And whenever they are given any benediction they thank Allah for it. And while they get angry, they over look it.

131. There are a few stages of self admiration. One of those is that the bad actions of a person get so very decorated in his eyes that he admires them as virtues. And another is that a servant acquires faith in Allah and boasts of a favors to him. And Allah has done a favor to him in that faith.

132. Allah has commanded three things along with three others in the Qur'an. Prayers are with alms. Thus, one who prays and does not give alms, his prayers are not approved. The thank giving to Allah is ordered along with thank giving and gratitude to the parents. Therefore, one who does not thank his parents, he has not thanked Allah. Piety has been commanded along with observing the ties of kinship. Therefore one who does not observe the ties of kinship has not adopted piety.

133. The miser does not have comfort and the jealous one has no joy and enjoyment, kings are unfaithful, and a liar has no manliness (courage).

134. One who repents upon a sin is like the one who does not have a sin.

135. Fulfill the rights of your relatives with as little as providing drink of water. The best way of fulfilling the rights of relatives is to refrain from harming them.

136. Faith is one degree superior to Islam, Piety is superior by one degree to Faith, and Certitude is a station superior to Faith. Nothing better has been bestowed upon human beings than Certitude.

137. One of the companions of the Imam Reza (a.s.), fell ill. Imam Reza (a.s.) went to visit him and said to him: How do you find yourself? He said: I had almost died after you left me, meaning the severity of the pain which befell him. The Holy Imam (a.s.) said: How did you find it? He said: It was a severe pain. The Holy Imam (a.s.) said: You did not meet death, but what befell you was something to warn and acquaint you with some of its aspects.

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Maxims of Imam al-Riza (a.s.)

Imam al-Riza (peace be upon him) said:

1. The character of faith is achieved only when the believer enjoys three qualities from his Lord, the Prophet (peace be upon him and

his family), and the leader –the Imam- (peace be upon him). The quality that he should learn from his Lord is the concealment of secrets, the quality that he should learn from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) is the courteous behavior, and the quality that he should learn from the leader (peace be upon him) is steadfastness against poverty and distress.

2. It is obligatory upon the wealthy to improve the standard of living of his family.

3. Praying and fasting is not the true worship. The true worship is the pondering over God.

4. Cleanness is one of the prophets' customs.

5. Perfuming, hairstyling, and polygamy—these three matters are within the customs of the apostles of God.

6. The honest has not betrayed you, but you have trusted the betrayal.

7. When God wants to do an action, He seizes the minds of the servants and does that action perfectly. Then, He gives them their minds back. Therefore, they wonder how and when such an action occurred.

8. Silence is one of the doors of wisdom. It yields amicability and leads to every goodness.

9. Every unnecessary act requires surplus age.

10. The elder brother is as same as the father.

11. When he was asked about the lowly ones: The lowly are those who possess things that engage them from God.

12. When you want to mention a present person, you should use his surname, but when you refer to an absent person, you should use his name.

13. The friend of any individual is his mind and his enemy is his ignorance.

14. Endearment to people is half of intelligence.

15. God surely hates gossips, squandering, and asking -for financial help- from the enemies.

16. A Muslim's mind is imperfect before he enjoys ten characters—good is expected from him, evil is far away from him, he regards others' little good deed as great favor and regards his great favor as little, he is not disturbed by people who ask him to settle their needs, he does not feel tired of seeking knowledge all his lifetime, he prefers poverty for God's sake to richness, prefers humility with God to honor with His enemies, and prefers obscurity to fame. The tenth character! Do you know what is it? They asked, 'What is it?' It is to regard anyone as better and more pious than him. He classifies people into two kinds; either better and more pious than him or eviler and lowlier than him. If he meets one of those who are eviler and lowlier than him, he wishes the good of that man might be hidden, and this will be better for him, while his own evil is apparent, and this will be worse for him. When he meets one of those who are better and more pious than him, he behaves modestly so that he may join him. If he does so, his glory will be lofty, good deeds will be acceptable, and his reputation will be good. Besides, he will be the master of people.

17. As a man asked him about the exegesis of God's saying: "God is Sufficient for the needs of whoever trusts in Him," Imam al-Reza (peace be upon him) said: Trusting in God is of various grades, one of which is to trust in whatever He does to you totally. You should satisfy yourself with whatever occurs to you, since you believe that God will not fail to bestow upon you with His good and custody and believe that everything is subject to His estimation; therefore, you should trust in Him by charging with Him whatever befalls you. Another grade of trusting in God is to believe in the unseen acts of God that you cannot comprehend, entrust their comprehension to Him as well as His custodians on them, and rely on him in such acts as well as others.

18. Ahmed bin Najm asked Imam al-Reza (peace be upon him) about the self-conceit that invalidates one's actions. The Imam answered:

Self-conceit is of various grades, one of which is that when the evil deeds seem to be attractive and virtuous; hence, the doer becomes self-conceited because he thinks he is doing well. Another grade of self-conceit is to believe that God owes you a great deal because you believed in Him. In fact, you owe God a great deal because He guided you to believe in Him.

19. Al-Fadhl related: I told Abul-Hasan al-Reza (peace be upon him) that Younus bin Abdurrahman claimed that knowledge is an acquired thing. The Imam (peace be upon him) answered: No, it is not. This is inaccurate. God gives knowledge (or faith) to whomever He wishes. He fixes it with a group and deposits with others. God will never seize it from those with whom it is fixed, but he will seize it from those with whom it is deposited.

20. Safwan bin Yahya said: I asked Imam al-Reza (peace be upon him) whether knowledge is given to the servants out of efforts that they themselves exert. He answered negatively. I also whether they will receive any reward due to their knowledge. The Imam (peace be upon him) answered: God has given them knowledge out of His grace and will reward them for it out of his grace, too.

21. Al-Fudhail bin Yasar said: I asked Imam al-Reza (peace be upon him) whether the acts of the servants (of God) are created or not. He answered:

By God, the acts are created (the planning for the acts, not their bringing into being). The Imam (peace be upon him) then added: Faith precedes Islam in one degree and God-fearing precedes faith in one degree. Conviction is the ever-best thing that has been given to sons of Adam –human beings-.

22. In his indication to the best servants, Imam al-Reza (peace be upon him) said: The best servants (of God) are those who feel delighted whenever they do a good deed, seek God's forgiveness whenever they commit an evildoing, thank God whenever they

obtain something, behave steadfastly whenever a misfortune befalls them, and pardon whenever they are enraged.

23. As he was asked about the limit of trusting in God, Imam al-Reza (peace be upon him) answered: The limit of trusting in God in to fear nobody except Him.

24. The banquet of wedding ceremony is a recommendable tradition.

25. Faith stands on four supports—trusting in God, satisfaction with His acts, submission to His commandments, and entrusting Him with all the affairs. The virtuous servant said (as the Quran relates): I entrust God with my affairs. God is Well Aware of His servants. God protected him against their evil plans.

26. Regard your relatives even by (providing them) a mouthful of water. The best form of regarding your relatives is to save them from your evil. God says: Do not make your charities fruitless by reproachfully reminding the recipient of your favor or making them feel insulted.

27. Forbearance and knowledge are within the signs of understanding. Silence is one of the doors of wisdom. It yields amicability and leads to every goodness.

28. The reward of the one who seeks earnings just for meeting the needs of his dependants is greater than the reward of the fighter for God's sake.

29. Someone said to Imam al-Reza (peace be upon him): "How is your morning?" He answered: I begin my day with a descending lifetime and recorded deeds. Death is inevitable for us, Hell is behind us, and we do not know what will happen to us.

30. You should not have any hope, whether for a worldly or a religious affair, in those who lack five characters: original lineage, generous quality, sedate manner, noble personality, and God-fearing.

31. Victory is always the confederate of the more forgiving party.

32. The generous call people's invitations to meals so that they will call his invitations, while the stingy does not call their invitations so as to save himself from inviting them.

33. We, the Prophet's family, consider our promises as debts that we must defray. This is the way of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his family).

34. People will live an age in which good health will be divided into ten divisions, nine of which will lie in seclusion and one in silence.

35. Muammar bin Khellad said to Imam al-Reza (peace be upon him): God advance your relief. The Imam commented: O Muammar, that is surely your relief. Mine is no more than a knapsack of a sealed handful of flour.

36. To help the weak is the best almsgiving.

37. The servants (of God) will not attain the reality of faith before they enjoy three characters—knowledge of the religious affairs, moderation in livelihood, and patience in misfortunes.

38. Imam Ar-Reza (peace be upon him) said to Abu Hashim Dawud bin Al-Qasim Al-Ja'fari: O Dawud, we have rights that are imposed upon you through the Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his family), and you have rights that are imposed upon us. We regard the rights of those who acknowledge our rights, while we have nothing to do with those who do not acknowledge our rights.

39. Imam al-Reza (peace be upon him) was someday attendant in the session of Al-Ma'mun when people, including Al-Fadhl bin Sahl Thurriyasatain, were discussing whether night preceded day in creation or not. Al-Fadhl addressed the question at Imam al-Reza (peace be upon him). "Do you want me to extract the answer from God's Book or the astronomical estimations?" "I like you to mention the astronomical estimations first," said Al-Fadhl. The Imam (peace be upon him) spoke: You claim that the world began with Cancer and the stars were in its prospect. On that account, Saturn was in

Libra, Jupiter in Cancer, Mars in Capricorn, Venus in Pisces, the moon in Taurus, and the sun in Aries in the middle of the sky. This occurs only in daylight. "What about the Book of God?" asked Al-Fadhl.

Imam al-Reza (peace be upon him) answered: The answer is in God's saying: The sun is not supposed to catch-up with the moon, nor is the night to precede the day. This means that day preceded night.

40. Ali bin Shuaib said: I, once, visited Abul-Hasan al-Reza (peace be upon him). He asked, "O Ali, do you know who is the best earner of livelihood among people?" I answered, "You, my master, is more knowledgeable than me." He (peace be upon him) said: The best earner of livelihood among people is that who improves others' livelihoods out of his livelihood.

41. Imam al-Reza, peace be upon him, asked Ali bin Shuaib, "O Ali, do you know who is the worst earner of livelihood among people?" "You are more knowledgeable?" answered Ali. The Imam (peace be upon him) said:

The worst earner of livelihood is that who deprives others of improving their livelihoods through his earnings.

O Ali, use good neighborhood with the graces, for they are wild—they will not return if they leave. O Ali, the evilest of people is that who deprives others of his aid, eats alone, and lashes his slave.

42. In the Eid ul-Fitr, a man told Imam al-Reza (peace be upon him) that he had broken his fast with dates and dust of the tomb. The Imam answered: You have joined the prophetic tradition to the blessing.

43. Imam al-Reza (peace be upon him) said to Abu Hashim Al-Ja'fari: O Abu Hashim, intelligence is the gift of God while the ethics are obtained through exertion of efforts. Thus, he whoever exerts efforts for obtaining ethics will surely obtain them while those who exert efforts for obtaining intelligence will not obtain anything except increasing ignorance.

44. Ahmed bin Omar and Al-Husain bin Yazid related: We visited Imam al-Reza (peace be upon him) and complained against the living changes that we encountered after we had lived in luxury and comfort, and asked him to supplicate to God to return our past luxury and comfort to us. The Imam spoke: Which extent do you want to attain exactly? Do you want to be kings? Are you pleased to have the same royalty of Tahir and Harthama while your current beliefs are seized from you?

"No," we answered, "We will never be pleased to have gold and silver as much as this world with all its contents if this causes us to change our current beliefs."

He (peace be upon him) then added:

God says: Give thanks, O family of David, And very few of My servants are grateful. Anticipate good from God, for God will treat those who anticipate good from Him according to their anticipations. God will accept the few deeds of those who satisfy themselves with the little sustenance. He who satisfies himself with the few legal gotten sustenance will have light burdens, his family will be living in comfort, and God will show him the maladies and the remedies of this world and will cause him to leave this world peacefully to move to the Abode of Peace.

45. Ibn As-Sikkeet asked Imam Ar-Reza (peace be upon him) about God's current argument against people. The Imam answered: God's current argument against people is the mind. It is the means by which the honest with God and the liar are recognized. "This is by God the most accurate answer," confessed Ibn As-Sikkeet.

46. The stingy do not enjoy comfort, the envious cannot enjoy pleasure, the enslaved cannot be loyal, and the liars do not have personality.

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Imam al-Riza (a.s.) Short Wise Sayings

The following group of short wise sayings has been reported from Imam al-Reza, peace be on him:

1. "People's hearts are sometimes coming towards you, sometimes keeping away from you; sometimes they are active, sometimes they are relaxed. If they come along, they will achieve wisdom understanding, and if they stay away, they will be exhausted and worn out; so, take them when they come to you and when they are active, and shun them when they stay away or are relaxed. "

2. "Accompany with caution the person who has authority over you; be humble when in the company of a friend; stay alert when facing an enemy, and mingle with the public with a smile on your face."

3. "Postponement is detrimental of the fulfillment of desires. Fulfillment is the gain of the strict. Wastefulness is the calamity of one who can afford it. Miserliness tears up honor. Passion invites trouble. The best and most honorable of virtues is to do others favors, to aid the one who calls for helps, to bring the hope of the hopeful to reality, not to disappoint the optimist, to have an ever increase of the number of friends when you are alive, and the number of those who will cry when you die. "

4. "Only the believer who takes admonishment can enjoin the good and forbid the evil. As for the possessor of whip and sword, he cannot."

5. "He who opposes an unjust ruler and an affliction from him befalls him will not rewarded for it nor will be provided with patience during it."

6. "When two groups (of people) meet (in battlefield), Allah helps the greater in pardoning."

7. "Man's walking behind a man is a trial for the followed and abasement for the follower."

8. "One who is blessed with plenty must spend generously on his family."

9. "Showing love toward men is the half of reason.

10. The rank of the eldest brother is like that of father."

11. Among the habits of Prophets is cleanliness."

12. The trustworthy do not betray you but you trust the traitor."

13. Every curiosity is in need of the curiosity of speech."

14. Surely Allah detests idle talk, wasting money, and excessive questioning."

15. The Imam, peace be on him, was questioned about the lowly and he said: Anyone who has something to distract him from Allah.

16. Among the practices (of the Prophet) is giving food during marriage.

17. The generous one eats from the food of men, that they may eat from his food.

18. We, the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt), think that our promise is a debt against us, as Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, did."

19. Time will come when one's safety lies in ten things nine of which are in staying aloof from men, and the tenth in staying silent."

20. Assisting the weak is better for you than your act of charity."

21. He, peace be on him, said to Abu Hashim, Dawud b. al-Qasim al-Ja'fari: "We have a right against you through Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, and you have a right against us. He who knows our right (against him), his right is incumbent

(upon us). He who does not know our right (against him) has no right (against us)."

22. The miser one is never restful; the envious is never pleased; the grumbling is never loyal; the liar has no conscience."

23. If you mention someone who is present, then call him with his own kunya (i.e. the father of someone, usually his eldest son). When he is absent, then mention his full name."

24. The believer is the brother of a believer (on the side of) his father and mother. Cursed, cursed is he who accuses his brother! Cursed, cursed is he who cheats his brother! Cursed, cursed is he who does not counsel his brother! Cursed, cursed is he who veiled himself from his brother! Cursed, cursed is he who backbites his brother!"

25. He who benefits a brother in Allah will make use of a house in the Garden."

26. When the believer does a good deed, he becomes happy. When he does an evil deed, he asks Allah' forgiveness. The Muslim is he from whose tongue and hand the Muslims are safe. To us does not belong he from whose calamities his neighbors are not safe."

27. A man said to him, peace be on him, said: "Ask for me from your Lord: good reverential fear, knowledge of the rights of brothers, and putting into effect what I know of that." Al-Rida`, peace be on him, said: "Allah has given that to you, for you have asked the excellent outward and inward qualities of the righteous."

28. Do not give to your brother of your own soul that whose harm against you is more than its profit for them."

29. He who gives relief to a believer, Allah will give him relief on the Day of Resurrection."

30. Wealth is not accumulated except by five qualities: extreme miserliness, a drawn out expectation, an overwhelming care, a

boycott of the relatives, and a preference of this life over the life to come."

31. If one saves the food of his year, his back is light, and he finds rest."

32. He whose good qualities are many is praised by them and is in no need of praise through mentioning them."

33. He who seeks the affair through its (proper) way does not slip. If he slips, stratagems do not abandon him."

34. Beware of one who wants to offer you advice by speaking behind others' back; he does not recognize how bad his own end shall be."

35. Poverty is the key to misery."

36. Do not pay attention to the view of someone who does not follow your advice for his own good."

37. He, peace be on him, said to al-Hasan b. Sahl regarding his condolence: "To congratulate one for a reward in store for him is better than to console him on a swift calamity."

38. Surely, renouncing AbuMusa al-Ash'ary is an act of pure Islam."

39. The mobs were the killers of the prophets."

40. Small sins are paths to great ones.

41. He who does not fear Allah regarding little does not fear him regarding much.

42. God abhors hearsay, the loss of one's funds (through foolishness), and excessive questioning."

43. To be courteous to people is to cross half the way to achieving wisdom."

44. The mind of a Muslim is not complete except after he acquires ten merits: God accepts his good deeds, he is trustworthy, he sees as plentiful what little good others do for him, while seeing his own abundant good as little; he does not fret from being asked for favors, nor does he feel tired of constantly seeking knowledge; poverty reached in order to please God is better for him than wealth accumulated otherwise; to be subjected to power while trying to serve God is better in his regard than achieving power over his foe, and obscurity he prefers over fame." Then he said, "And the third one..., do you know what the third one is?" It was said to him, "What is it?" He said, "Whenever he meets someone, he says, `He is better than me and more pious.' People are two types: a person better than him and more pious, and one who is more evil than him and more lowly. If he meets the one who is more evil than him and more lowly, he would say to himself `Maybe the goodness of this (statement) is implied, and it is better that he hears such a compliment, while my own goodness is apparent and it is detrimental to me.' And when he sees someone better than him and more pious, he would humble himself before him trying to raise himself to his level. So if he does that, his glory will be higher, his reputation will be better, and he will become distinguished above his contemporaries."

45. Silence is one of the gates of wisdom. Silence wins the love of others. It is an indication of everything good."

46. Everyone's friend is his reason; his enemy is his ignorance."

47. Among the habits of Prophets is cleanliness.

48. One who is blessed with plenty must spend generously on his family.

49. If you mention someone who is present, use a kunya (surname) for him, and if he is absent, mention his full name.

50. Time will come when one's safety lies in ten things nine of which are in staying aloof from people, and the tenth in staying silent.

51. Whoever scrutinizes his behavior wins; whoever does not loses. Whoever fears consequences will live safely. Whoever learns a moral from others achieves insight, and whoever achieves insight achieves wisdom, and whoever achieves wisdom achieves knowledge. One who befriends the ignorant will be worn out. The best of wealth is that which safeguards one's honor. The best of reason is one's knowledge of his own self. If a true believer becomes angry, his anger does not cause him to abandon righteousness; when he is pleased, his pleasure will not tempt him into wrong-doing, and when he achieves power, he does not take more than what rightfully is his.

52. If one's attributes become plentiful, they will relieve him from having to win praise by mentioning them.

53. Do not pay attention to the view of someone who does not follow your advice for his own good. Whoever seeks guidance from the appropriate source will never slip, and if he slips, he will find a way to correct himself.

54. People's hearts are sometimes coming towards you, sometimes keeping away from you; sometimes they are active, sometimes they are relaxed. If they come along, they will achieve wisdom and understanding, and if they stay away, they will be exhausted and worn out; so, take them when they come to you and when they are active, and shun them when they stay away or are relaxed.

55. Accompany with caution the person who has authority over you; be humble when in the company of a friend; stay alert when facing an enemy, and mingle with the public with a smile on your face.

56. Postponement is detrimental to the fulfillment of desires. Fulfillment is the gain of the strict. Wastefulness is the calamity of one who can afford it. Miserliness tears up honor. Passion invites trouble. The best and most honorable of virtues is to do others favors, to aid the one who calls for help, to bring the hope of the hopeful to reality, not to disappoint the optimist, to have an ever increase of the number of friends when you are alive, and the number of those who will cry when you die.

57. The miser one is never restful. The envious is never pleased. The grumbling is never loyal. The liar has no conscience.

58. One who struggles to satisfy the needs of his family shall have more rewards than those who make jihad in the Way of God.

59. Imam Reza (a.s.) was asked once who the best of believers are; he said, "They are the ones who are excited with expectation when they do a good deed, who pray for God's forgiveness when they commit a bad one, who show gratitude when they are granted something, who are patient when they are tried, who forgive those who anger them.

60. He (a.s.) was asked once, "How did you start your day?" He answered, "With a shorter life-span, with our deeds being recorded, with death round our necks, with Fire behind our backs, and we do not know what will be done to us." He (a.s.) said, "Wealth is not accumulated except by five means: extreme miserliness, a long-standing optimism, an overwhelming care, a boycott of the relatives, and a preference of this life over the life to come.

61. Ali ibn Shu'ayb said that he once visited Abul-Hassan Ali al-Reza (a.s.) who asked him, "O Ali! Do you know whose subsistence is the best?" He answered, "You, master, know better than me." He said, "It is that of the one whose others' subsistence is improved through his own. Do you know who has the worst subsistence?" Ali answered, "You know better than me!" The Imam (a.s.) answered saying, "It is that of the one who does not include others in it." Then he added, "O Ali! Be thoughtful to the boons for they are wild: if they leave people, they never come back to them. O Ali! The worst of people is someone who stops his contributions to charity, eats by himself, and whips his slave.

62. Your assistance of the weak is better than your act of charity.

63. No servant of God achieves true belief except when he acquires three attributes: He derives juristic deductions of the creed; he is wise regarding his livelihood, and he is patient when faced with calamities.

64. Beware of one who wants to offer you advice by speaking behind others' backs; he does not realize how bad his own end shall be.

65. He (a.s.), upon the death of al-Hassan ibn Sahl, said, "To congratulate one for a reward in store for him is better than to console him on a quick calamity.

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The Qualities of the Shia in the View of Imam al-Riza (a.s.)

❖ The Shia are those who submit to the Imams

My father, Allah have mercy upon him, related to us from Ali bin Ibrahim from his father from Ali bin Mabad from al-Hussein bin Khalid that Abu al-Hasan ar-Reza (a.s.) said: Our (true) Shia are those who submit to our orders, carry out our directives, and dissent from our enemies. He who does not enjoy such characteristics is not one of us.

❖ The Shia were created from the same clay of the Imams

My father, Allah may have mercy upon him, narrated to us from Abdullah bin Ja'far from Ahmed bin Muhammad from Ibn Abi Nejran that he heard Abu al-Hasan (Imam al-Reza) saying: He who antagonizes our Shia is antagonizing us and whoever follows them is following us, because they are part of us. They were created from the same clay from which we were created. He who loves them is one of us, and whoever hates them is not with us. Our Shia see through the light of Allah, move about in the mercy of Allah, and will win the dignity of Allah. We feel the same pains that any of our Shia feels during ailment, we become grieved whenever any of our Shia becomes grieved, and we feel happy whenever any of our Shia feels happy. No one of our Shia can be out of our auspices, whether he was in the east or the west of the earth. The debt that is left by any of our Shia is in our responsibility while the estate is his heirs'.

Our Shia are those who offer the prayers, defray the zakat, perform the hajj to the Holy House of Allah, fast during the month of Ramadan, declare their loyalty to the Prophet's household, and declare their disavowal of the enemies of the Prophet's household. Those are the people of faith, God-fearing, piety, and devoutness. He whoever rejects them is rejecting Allah, because they are the true servants and the genuine disciples of Allah. By Allah I swear, each individual of them will be granted (on the Day of Resurrection) the right to intercede for people as many as the individuals of the tribes of Rabeea and Madhar, out of Allah's honor to them.

❖ He who honors a dissident is not Shiite

Muhammad bin al-Hasan bin al-Waleed related to us from Muhammad bin al-Hasan as-Saffar from Muhammad bin Isa bin Ubaid from Ibn Faddhal that Imam al-Reza (a.s.) said: As for anyone who builds relations with somebody who disregards us, disregards somebody who builds good relations with us, praises somebody who reviles at us, or honors somebody who dissents from us, he is surely not one us and we are surely not from him.

❖ The loyalty to the enemies of Allah

Muhammad bin Musa bin al-Mutawakkil narrated to us from Ali bin al-Hussein as-Sa'dabadi from Ahmed bin Muhammad bin Khalid from Ibn Faddhal that Imam al-Reza (a.s.) said: He who follows the enemies of Allah will certainly antagonize the disciples of Allah, and whoever antagonizes the disciples of Allah will antagonize Allah Who will incumbently put him in the fire of Hell.

❖ The affection for the Prophet's Household

Muhammad bin Musa bin al-Mutawakkil, Allah may have mercy upon him, narrated to us from Muhammad bin Yahya from Ahmed bin Muhammad al-Khezzaz that Imam al-Reza (a.s.) said: Some of those who claim the affection for us –the Prophet's household- are more dangerous for our Shia than the ordeal of the Dajjal. I asked: How do such people become dangerous? The Imam (a.s.) answered: They support our enemies and antagonize our followers. When this occurs, the right will be confused with the wrong and the

whole matter will be perplexed. Then, there will be no distinction between the believers and the hypocrites.

❖ The believer has characters from his Lord, Prophet, and Imam

My father, Allah may have mercy upon him, narrated to us from Ahmed bin Idris from Muhammad bin Ahmed bin Yahya bin Imran al-Ash'ari from Sahl bin Ziyad from al-Harith bin ad-Delhath (the servant of Imam al-Reza) that Abu al-Hasan Reza (a.s.) said: A servant will not be a faithful believer before he learns three characters: one from the Lord, one from His Messenger, and one from the Imam. The character that he should learn from Allah is the concealment of secrets. Allah the Glorified says: He knows the unseen and He does not allow anyone to know His secrets… (72:28) The character that he should learn from the Prophet (pbuh) is that he should treat people courteously. Allah says: Take the surplus, preach the truth, and keep away from the ignorant ones. (7:199). The character that he should learn from the Imam (a.s.) is to be steadfast against situations of misfortune and crises. Allah says: … and those who exercise patience in poverty and in distress. (2:177).

***

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The Book: With its stimulating collection of traditions from the main figures of Islam, Great Traditions in Islamic Ethics takes the reader beyond the morality of Islam to the profound nature of Islamic Mystical inquiry. This excellent resource helps scholars, students and interests in Islamic Morality develop their knowledge and understanding needed to examine and scrutinize traditions in Islamic ethics. This book (hopefully the first volume of consecutive volumes) has an introduction and eight chapters. The first chapter contains selected verses from the Holy Quran which concern certain moral problems and ethical characteristics. The second chapter contains a collection of Prophetic traditions presenting moral behaviors and ethical guidelines. The next six chapters present selected sermons, sayings, wise maxims of the Imams, the successors of the Holy Prophet of Islam, concerning moral problems and ethical teachings.

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The Most Compassionate,

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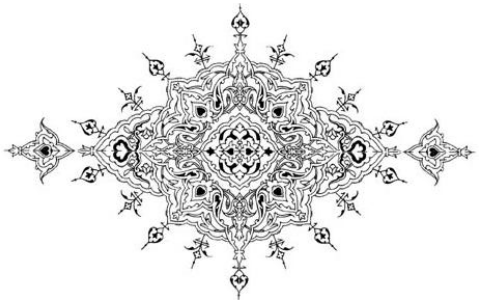

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